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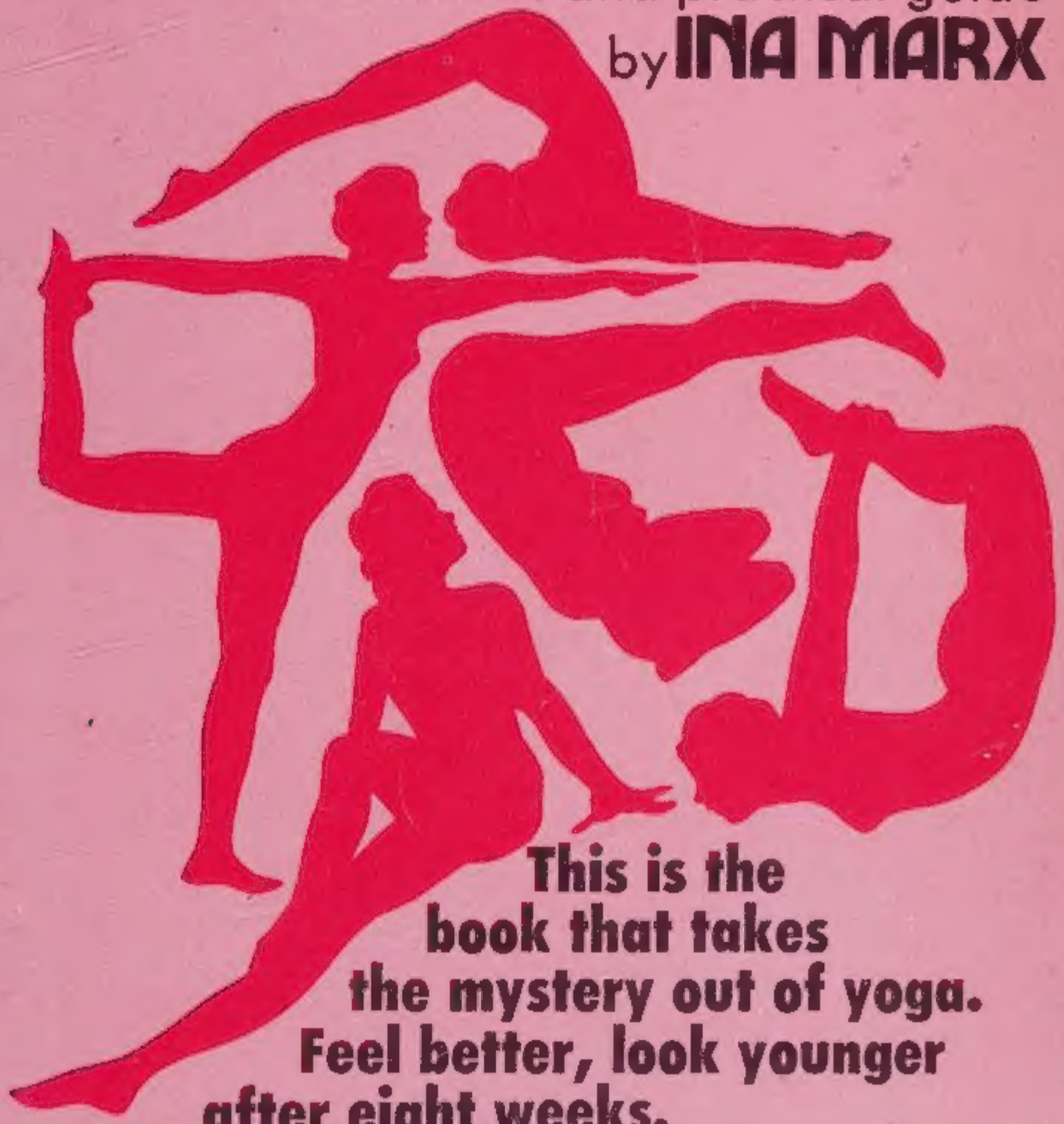
YOGA AND COMMON SENSE

A realistic and practical guide

by INA MARX



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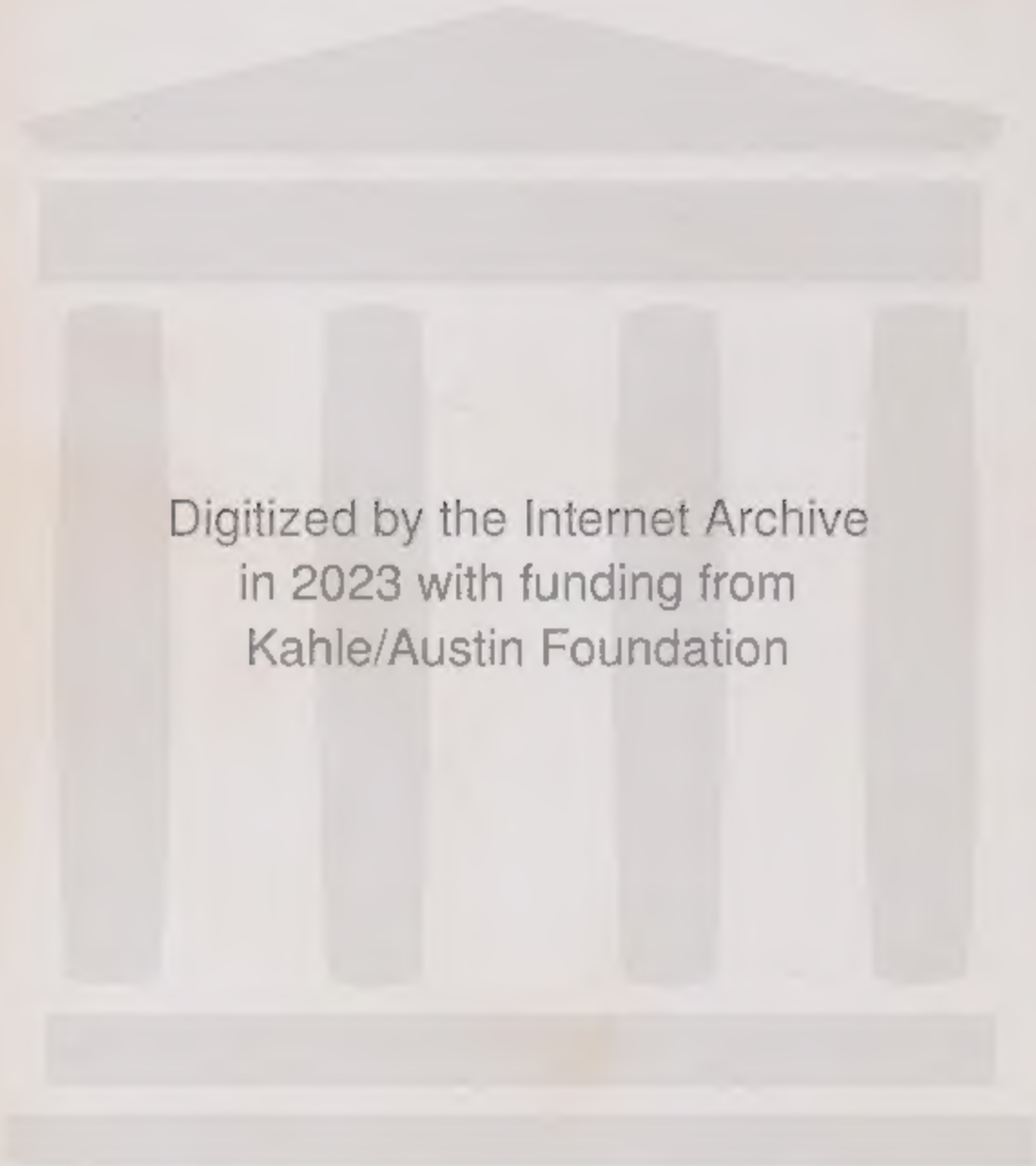

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Ina Marx, author of *Yoga and Common Sense,* was born in Berlin but left for America in 1937 to escape Nazi persecutions, which had affected both her health and her state of mind. Misfortune dogged her. She was subsequently caught in a near-tragic fire which forced her to lie in bed for many months in a steel corset and left her with lingering physical and psychosomatic symptoms. She consulted doctors for 10 years without noticeable improvement. Then in 1962 she discovered Yoga—through a meeting in New York with an Indian yogi who became her sympathetic teacher. Mrs. Marx credits Yoga with having restored her to health and peace of mind. In this book she passes along to you the exercises and other Yoga regimens which, almost literally, saved her life.

"A surprisingly easy and rewarding way to get in touch with one's natural vitality, the author shows how Yoga makes it possible to lose excess weight, stop smoking and derive real pleasure from life."

Book News

YOGA AND COMMON SENSE

INA MARX

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YOGA AND COMMON SENSE

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I dedicate this to book All My Students

I am very grateful to: HELENE WOLFF–for final editing; MAUREEN COLEMAN – who typed the manuscript; HARRY and HELEN GARFIELD–photographers; my students who posed for the pictures: JUDIE AUGENSTEIN, SALVATORE CAPUTO, MATTIE CRUTCHFIELD, MIRTHE LALLI, HENRY SKRILL–and my JUDY.

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YOGA AND COMMON SENSE

CHAPTER I

YOGA AND COMMON SENSE

"Life Begins at Forty"—we read it, we write it, we talk about it, but most of us don't believe a word of it. But I can vouch for the truth of that statement because I first began Yoga when I was forty. Now at forty plus I am living and enjoying life the way I never did, the way we were created to: with good health, peace of mind, and happiness.

In this country, where the current battle cry is "Never trust anyone over thirty," the average American past that magic age is convinced he is skidding downhill. For years millions of American housewives listened anxiously to their radios, hoping that a woman over thirty-five could find love and happiness. Judging from her unending quest, she couldn't. When Jack Benny coyly admits to being no more

than thirty-nine, his audience laughs sympathetically, because in this country age forty places one in the dreaded category of middle age.

In contrast, the European regards this time as the prime of life. He considers a woman over thirty-five more attractive than her younger counterpart, because she possesses the allure that comes only with experience. As evidence, look at the continental courtesans and mistresses of history who conquered their lovers at an age when most American men consider a woman passé. And while the forty-year-old American male often considers his most productive years behind him, the European of the same age thinks nothing of embarking on a new career or getting married for the first time—both ventures usually succeeding. But American society labels this age group the outest of the out. It's not easy for us, the generation of World War II, to remain self-confident in the face of this kind of pressure where everything is geared to the young.

Fashion has gone mini, midi, and maxi; art—psychedelic; music—rock; theater—living; and everything has gone to pot—and even that word no longer means only a utensil in which to cook. It is all too easy to understand why people who are not old begin to feel old and, as a result, act old, look old, and inevitably become old long before they should. But it is the *fear* of growing old that is the real cause of the problem, not the aging process itself.

Yoga can prevent premature aging and make you feel, look, and think younger. I offer myself as living proof, and I know many people who, like myself, experienced life beginning at forty through Yoga. Yoga, of course, can benefit every age from four to eighty, but it has perhaps most to offer those approaching middle age.

Yoga can provide a whole new outlook on life. Around

forty most of us have got ourselves into poor physical condition. Women have acquired a spare tire and men a paunch. Middle-age spread isn't merely an expression; it's one more fact of life. In a desperate attempt to stay young, most people go rushing down the wrong paths. Some seek consolation for unhappiness and frustration in a hot fudge sundae, a whipped-cream cake, or an extra martini. Others engage in the rigors of sports like tennis and handball, both much too strenuous for out-of-condition muscles. Then there are those who, in desperation, pick up any new fad that promises instant results—weird diets, Olympic exercise programs, expensive gadgets. When all these fail to live up to expectations, the person is left more desperate than before he started. All the time he was looking in the wrong direction. If he had directed his search toward Yoga, he could have eliminated countless disappointments and frustrations.

I am convinced that many people who would like to study Yoga have been scared away by the intricacies of Yoga philosophy. This book is for people, like myself, who become confused when confronted, for instance, with the abstractions of transcendental meditation. There are many excellent interpretations of Yoga philosophy which definitely should be read, but I urge the beginner to avoid them. Only someone firmly established in Yoga will find it advantageous to delve deeply into Yoga history, religion, and philosophy. I also strongly advise that books about the supernatural aspects of Yoga, such as miracles and return journeys from the dead and other faraway places, should be disregarded. *Original Yoga stresses the natural, not the supernatural.*

If you're picturing me as a spiritual ascetic, isolated from the world in a placid isle of Yoga, you're mistaken. My life,

from my earliest years, has been anything but dull. I have a husband, two daughters, and a house to care for, plus a batch of obligations to my family and community which I do not neglect. My daughters, age thirteen and twenty-one, practice Yoga, but my husband does not. He's proud of my achievements, including my trim figure, but so far has not attempted Yoga. He promises that one day he will, and I haven't given up hope. Although he is sympathetic to the cause, he would be quite dismayed, to say the least, if at six o'clock he found me standing on my head instead of his dinner sitting on the table. I am a suburban housewife, and like other suburban housewives, I spend much of my time browsing through the shelves of my local supermarket and chauffeuring my youngest daughter to lessons, friends' houses, and meetings.

I teach Yoga to other housewives during the day and to working men and women in the evenings. I would be happy if I could fulfill all the teaching demands made on me, because I realize, from my own experience, that there is a shortage of good Yoga teachers. Yoga cannot exactly be practiced while diapering the baby or watching the soufflé, but it certainly is possible to be a practitioner even an instructor, like myself—of Yoga and not neglect your family.

One of the main purposes of this book is to prove that Yoga is feasible for the busy person who can't possibly devote several hours of the day to meditation but must concentrate on keeping one step ahead of a curious accident-prone two-year-old, purchasing and preparing an endless stream of meals, or meeting the payments of mortgage, taxes, and orthodontia. I fit one half-hour to an hour of Yoga practice a day into my full schedule, and if one day I have to miss my exercises, I don't feel guilty.

This book is for the suburban, city, and rural wife and

husband and for any working person, with obligations to family and society, who cannot devote his life to Yoga, but who can certainly fit Yoga into a small portion of his day to enrich his life.

I could have called this book *Yoga Over Forty, Yoga Made Simple*, or *Yoga and the Suburban Housewife*. If I had wanted to latch onto a proven formula for financial success, I could even have chosen *Yoga and the Jewish Housewife*, because that title would also be appropriate. However, I preferred the title *Yoga and Common Sense* to appeal to the majority of Americans, because I believe that Americans possess an ingrained common sense. Above all other human characteristics I value common sense—with sense of humor running a close second.

It was probably my own innate common sense that pulled me through the many personal crises that punctuated so many years of my life with dismaying regularity. As a young girl, I was forced to leave my native Germany because of Hitler. I had to cope with leaving my sheltered home and family and managing to shift for myself in a strange country. Unlike the Hollywood stereotype of such uprooted children, I was not molded along heroic proportions but was a thoroughly spoiled brat, accustomed to having my own way and totally unprepared and unfit to make decisions for myself. Difficult as those days were, I survived and, after a time, even managed quite well.

No single quality is more important to survival and to living than common sense, and Yoga represents the embodiment of common sense. The practice of Yoga develops the use of our common sense, which is a combination of instinct and reason. We were all born with instinct. Instinct, however, got lost in the shuffle as we became civilized, but animals live by it, small children use it, and it is lying dor-

mant in all of us to be called upon in emergencies when we have no time for reasoning. In general, though, we bury our instincts because we are afraid to use them.

In the same way we also fear to use our common sense. Children possess an amazing amount of clear-eyed common sense which is all too often squelched by distorted ideas of parents and teachers. An infant comes to us all instinct, without hates, prejudices, inhibitions, fears, or evil thoughts. Along with what is considered a civilized education comes a large dose of all these characteristics plus instruction in the arts of lying and pretense, and the general suppression of our instincts. Ironically enough, often as adults we have to pay an analyst fifty dollars an hour to dredge up the very thoughts and emotions which were our birthright and were squelched by unthinking parents. Consider, for instance, the all too common occurrence of a mother's lying about her child's age to sneak him on the bus free. The mother doesn't give the matter a second thought, or if she does it's to congratulate herself on saving a few cents by putting something over on someone. But for the child a significant thing has happened. His mother has lied. Therefore, it's all right, even preferable, to lie. He's had an effective lesson in perverting the instinct of truth, which leaves its indelible mark. By the time we are adults we have become so completely brainwashed by social attitudes, advertisements, and the mass media that we do not have the confidence to trust our own judgment lest we do the wrong thing. Faced with a problem, we ask everyone's advice and try to do what will please everyone else, instead of doing what we think is right and pleasing ourselves.

Through the practice of Yoga postures and breathing we relax our bodies and our minds. By stretching the body to relieve physical tensions, we release mental tensions. Once tensions are relieved, we are able to think more clearly. Re-

laxed and released from the distorted attitudes that bind us, we are better able to follow our instincts. The full realization of this process will be completely understood when you have actually practiced Yoga. You will see how by deliberately slowing down, you will be able to look into yourself, to accept yourself as you are, to appreciate yourself, and to gain confidence in yourself.

Confidence is gained by accomplishing what we thought was impossible. Looking at some of the Yoga postures, you may think you will never be able to achieve them, but you will, for the body will stretch. Little by little without forcing, your body will respond, and the accomplishment of an exercise you thought you could never do will boost your confidence. Every day, as you continue in Yoga, you will accomplish more and your confidence will grow. If you play the piano, you will remember that first you started with simple pieces, and then, as your confidence in your skill increased, you were able to tackle complicated compositions which had seemed impossible when you began. It is the same with any skill, but other skills represent only isolated accomplishments. In Yoga this confidence involves your body, your mind, your very self, and so extends to other areas of your life. You begin to say to yourself, "If I can do this, I can do other things." The building of self-confidence is a circular process: the more we accomplish, the more our self-confidence grows; the more our self-confidence grows, the more we can accomplish.

Once we have bolstered our self-confidence, we are free to rely on our common sense. In effect, we have freed that common sense person imprisoned within us. We will make our own decisions without depending on the advice of others. This isn't a promise of omniscience. Naturally not even the common sense person knows everything, but he knows when he needs an expert's advice and whom to ask. Instead

of being obscured by prejudices, his judgment is clear and sound. And as we rely on our own decisions, our self-confidence is continually increasing. Self-confidence is the root of all our striving. We may think that we desire material riches, personal gain, or the approval of others to make us happy, but even when we attain these, we are neither content nor happy. Only within ourselves can we find happiness. The combination of common sense and Yoga will lead us to inner peace and fulfillment.

CHAPTER II

YOGA AND ME

Now I know that I was searching for Yoga for many years without even realizing what I was looking for. I stumbled across it by chance, if it can be said that things like that happen only by chance. The chain of events that led to my discovery of Yoga can perhaps be traced back to my childhood when my father whisked me out of a Europe on the brink of war and brought me to California.

After providing for my safety, he returned to Germany, leaving me with distant relatives. During the next few years I moved from family to family, going to school, working, and, I must confess, feeling pretty sorry for myself. At last, as the gates of Europe had almost slammed shut for Jews, my mother managed to get out and dock in New York. Over-

joyed, I joined her there as soon as I could. My brother had also come to America and joined the Canadian Army, but my father died in a concentration camp.

After the war I returned to Europe. By now I was an American citizen working as an interpreter for the United States Army, first in France and then in Germany. In Germany I met Eric, who had fought in the Danish underground against the Nazis and was now also working for the American Army. We fell in love, but, as Army employees, found ourselves wound in red tape when we wanted to get married.

The days before our wedding were spent filling out countless forms and wrestling with Army regulations complicating our intentions. In the end love, and perseverance, did triumph. The red tape was cut, and we were married under the official sanctification of the United States Army. The bride wore khaki. So did the groom.

Not long after that the Army agencies in Germany were dissolved and we found ourselves out of jobs. Enjoying ourselves too much to leave the party, we decided to remain in Europe before returning to the States. We gypsied through Europe, starting various businesses only to have them fail because of our own inexperience, bad luck, or a combination of both. We lived in Israel four years before finally returning to the United States, with empty pockets but not empty hands, because by then we had a four-year-old daughter, Carolyn.

Once back in New York my husband found a job, we signed a lease on an apartment, and I became pregnant again. The only thing missing was money. To help out, I got a job. Every weekend, when my husband was home to take care of our daughter, I packed up and went to work at one of the large luxury resorts in the nearby Catskill Mountains. I received my salary, board, and room in a ramshackle firetrap reserved for the hotel's help.

One winter night, as the staff lay sleeping, fire broke out. I was in a room on the third floor and, like many others, I was trapped by spreading flames consuming the single wooden staircase and cutting off escape. Screams of "Fire! Fire!" reached me as in a dream. Exhausted, I snuggled down deeper into my bed, wanting –strangely enough— nothing so much as to stay right where I was. Indeed, having faced death then and also at other times, let me assure those who dread it that death is not that terrifying when you are confronted with it. What saved me were my instincts rather than my intellect. Like someone in a dream, without really thinking out my actions, I got up and looked around for a way to escape. There was only one possible means—the two windows in this third-floor dormitory. One window was always stuck closed. The other was open but blocked by the other occupants trying to escape the fast-approaching flames. I smashed through the stuck window and crawled out onto the ledge. I strained to hear the sound of an approaching fire engine through the cold night, but there was none. When the flames came unbearably close, I let go, plummeting down to the concrete-covered ground. By the time the fire engine did arrive the building had burned to the ground and ten people were dead. I am convinced that if these people had relied on their common sense they would not have died. Later, when those of us who had survived discussed the fire, we all agreed that because of the sudden disturbance of sleep and the shock we had reacted instinctively, almost like sleepwalkers.

The bodies of those who died revealed that they were so bound by dogmas of convention and propriety that they obviously couldn't use their instinctive common sense. Some of the victims had wasted valuable time putting on underwear and stockings because of modesty, or by going back for their possessions. Others could think only of trying to escape by the stairs, which had already become im-

passable. Those of us who had immediately followed our instincts and jumped were injured, some crippled for life, but *all had survived.*

Unrestricted common sense proved to be the difference between life and death. Obviously there are other times in life when consequences will not be so final, yet to enable ourselves to really live in the fullest meaning of the word we must break the chains that bind our common sense.

As a result of the jump, I suffered a fractured spine, broken pelvic and pubic bones, and internal injuries—and, among those who had jumped from the third floor, I was one of the lucky ones. But, of course, I lost my unborn baby.

The fire and its immediate results were a nightmare to live through. Now, many years later, I can look back on it philosophically, without anguish, and tell about it as any other experience, not only because it happened a long time ago, but because I believe that it was necessary for me to have lived that tragedy in order to have a keener appreciation of my present happiness. Only when one has experienced pain and suffering can one truly appreciate the everyday good things in life that are so easily taken for granted. Also, that fire was an essential milestone in my life because it brought me to Yoga.

Fortunately, workmen's compensation shouldered the burden of my medical expenses and the cost of the various contraptions my body was confined within. For starters, I spent two months in the hospital encased in a back cast. When that came off, I was released and locked into a steel brace. Ultimately, I graduated to various steel-enforced corsets which I was told I would have to wear for the rest of my life. Even a few steps without my corset meant subjecting myself to excruciating pain. As an outpatient at one of the finest rehabilitation hospitals in the country, I underwent series of massages, heat treatments, and stretch-

ings. My injuries had knitted, but the pain persisted. I was a physical and mental wreck, although compared to the other patients in that hospital I could have been classified 1-A. I walked through the hospital door on my own two feet, while almost all the other patients rode in wheelchairs, some without arms or legs, others merely torsos. But I was feeling far too sorry for myself to have any compassion toward anyone else. Most of the staff were also disabled. In particular, I remember the crippled social worker, a remarkable woman with a great feeling of compassion for me. Although she sat in a wheelchair to interview me, I envied her, because I could sense she possessed what I lacked—peace of mind. During the course of treatment, psychological therapy had been advised, but my husband couldn't pay for that, and the insurance company had refused to pay the expenses. By sheer tenacity, this woman arranged for psychotherapy sessions for me and somehow persuaded the compensation board to pay for them. Now I only want to mention that psychotherapy helped me to hang on. Later, I will explain more about Yoga's relation to psychiatry. Eventually, I was laced into my final corset and sent out into the world to "resume a normal life." At that time, my normal life meant, in addition to the strictures of the corset, continuous pain, overweight, fatigue, nervousness, insomnia, and three packs of cigarettes daily. In short, I was a mess. However, I must give myself credit for one good quality, at least—I was a fighter, even if I usually fought in the wrong direction. For instance, during my better periods I looked for work and took jobs which I usually couldn't handle. I went to school and took the wrong courses, joined organizations which bored me to death, and even tried physical programs which left me frustrated and in tears. There were times I was so desperate that I started looking into different religions to convert to, but before I

took any steps, my common sense managed to make itself heard by firmly saying, "No." My only successful venture was to give birth to our second daughter, Judy. I managed to pull myself together for that event but, shortly thereafter, fell apart again. I was desperately seeking something to give meaning to my life. If only someone had come offering Yoga to me.

A friend of mine who had also been in the fire, a fellow jumper, had suffered a back injury more serious than mine. She had been in and out of a cast for many years but without results. Finally she underwent the spinal fusion which had been put off as the last resort because of the seriousness of the operation. Fortunately, it was successful. A few days after she left the hospital, I went to see her. Naturally, I was outfitted in my full regalia of the corset, which incidentally added to my girth and detracted from my self-confidence, and expected my friend to be similarly supported. But, to my amazement, she was wearing absolutely no support whatsoever. Considering myself an authority in the proper care and treatment of back injuries, I was curious as to why her doctor had not prescribed a brace. "Because," she answered, "he claims that my back muscles would not have a chance to regain their strength naturally." The obvious common sense of this was like a revelation. My own bones and muscles had healed but had never been given the opportunity to regain their strength. Artificially constricted for years by braces and corsets, they were incapable of holding up on their own; in the ensuing years I have observed and concluded that restricting garments in general are a health hazard. The Victorian ladies who had to be saddled into their stays may have had tiny waists, but they also had short sick lives. Western women, aghast at the old Chinese custom of binding girls' feet, have probably done more harm to their own internal organs with

corsets. Corsets and girdles compress vital organs, muscles, and tissues and impair circulation. At present, there does seem to be a trend toward more natural, less constricting underwear. But one never knows what new body shape will be hailed as the next epitome of beauty, and millions of women will squeeze their bodies into bone, steel, and plastic in an effort to achieve it. (Some physicians are even claiming that the truss, for years the standard accessory for hernia cases, does more damage than good.) If my muscles had been weakened by lack of use, I reasoned, they could be strengthened by use. In other words, what my sluggish back muscles needed was exercise. It seems incredible that not one doctor among the many that I consulted, not even those at the rehabilitation center, had ever suggested exercise. To me exercise meant calisthenics. With new-found enthusiasm I joined a gym and started the 1-2-3-4, up and down, left and right routine—and then collapsed with pain. Realizing the need for guidance, I went to the sensible doctor who had operated on my friend. He agreed that I was on the right track, but on the wrong exercise, and gave me a set of exercises of his own invention. They were quite dull; most of them were done pressing against a wall. Hopefully, I practiced religiously for a few months, varying the walls I pressed against in an attempt to inject some interest into the exercises. They did me no harm, as calisthenics had, but I couldn't detect any improvement. They hadn't done the walls any good either.

Discouraged, but still open to suggestions, I listened with interest to one of those third-hand stories about a friend of a friend of a friend who had benefited greatly from Yoga exercises. "Why not Yoga?" I asked myself. After all, I had tried everything else. And I ventured forth to find a teacher. Although Yoga was already popular on the West Coast, at that time it was literally unheard of in New York and

greatly confused with yogurt, Yogi Bear, and Yogi Berra. Under Yoga in the Manhattan phone directory there was little choice. I came up with a book store, a disconnected number, a yogi who, I was told, was presently in India, and one person who answered and said, yes, he was a teacher and available for private lessons. I made an appointment, bringing a friend with me for protection because I vaguely associated Yoga with opium dens and white slavery. Contrary to my expectations, I found a pleasant-looking Indian in Western dress. He listened sympathetically, cast an eye at my lumpy figure, and suggested we give Yoga exercises a try. It was fortunate that he turned out to be a good teacher, if not an inspiring one. When I first began my weekly lessons, my situation seemed as hopeless as teaching Yoga to an oak tree, for I could not bend in any direction. My stubborn muscles resisted the new demands being made on them. But as the weeks went by I loosened up more and more. After three months I threw away my corset. Since that day I have worn no support of any kind and my back has become stronger than it has ever been. I had gone into Yoga for the limited purpose of strengthening my back. Having accomplished that, after a year I discarded Yoga. I was convinced that Yoga was superior to any other kind of exercise but I was completely ignorant of its full meaning, nor did my teacher allude to any but its physical aspects. I did not backslide into all my pre-Yoga ways. I cherished my new limberness and at times even practiced, especially the Headstand which had taken me so long to master. Life seemed to take a turn for the better, although, except for my new flexibility, I appeared much the same. I was still overweight, nervous, tired, and smoking three packs of cigarettes daily. In spite of all this, I was happier with myself in my role as wife and mother, and my family was happy with me.

As far as I was concerned Yoga had had all the impact on my life it was ever going to have —but I was mistaken. As I mentioned, I was overweight and, not surprisingly, so was my younger daughter. In fact, my husband and I both come from a long line of what anxious mothers call good eaters and our whole family is inclined toward obesity. My daughter has been a roly-poly from the day she was born. Besides constantly watching her diet, I have always been on the lookout for physical activities for her. Meanwhile, California Yoga teachers had begun to infiltrate New York, and, although not exactly a household word, Yoga became a little better known. By chance I heard about a mother-daughter Yoga program, in which I enthusiastically enrolled myself and my reluctant younger daughter, Judy. After a few lessons, daughter became a Yoga dropout. (She has since become a Yoga enthusiast, see pictures.)* But mother remained because (a) I had paid for the course in advance, (b) I found that working with a class was fun, and (c) I suddenly caught a glimpse of a more hopeful future. Being anything but a fool, I recognized a good thing when I saw it.

After completing that course, I re-enrolled and progressed from intermediate student to advanced. By this time I was quite interested in Yoga -I even signed up for a teacher training course—although the possibility of my teaching Yoga was the furthest thing from my mind. But day by day, as I demonstrated exercises in front of the class with ever growing confidence, I realized that here was something that I could do well and help other people by doing. Then I knew that there was nothing in the world that I wanted more than to become a Yoga teacher. And I, who had never really directed my energies toward achieving

* My other daughter, Carolyn, couldn't pose because she was busy studying for finals.

any goal, suddenly knew how to go about it—by applying myself with discipline and hard work. In the past I had always worked belligerently, but now I worked with a slow steady deliberation born of my purpose of mind. I knew that consistency was the vital factor in achieving my goal. I don't mean that I turned my whole day over to Yoga, because after all I still had my family to care for, but I practiced conscientiously one hour a day. I never exceeded an hour of practice, because to overdo would have defeated my purpose. Through sheer mechanical practice everything fell into line. My figure improved. I was healthier and more energetic. For the first time in years I fell asleep easily. I gradually eliminated tranquilizers and barbiturates, which up to that time had been a staple part of my diet. Quite naturally and painlessly I gave up smoking.

As my physical body changed, my mental outlook and attitude did also. It was nothing drastic or sudden, but a slow manifestation of character change. My sense of values became different, and so did my attitude toward people. I developed more patience, kindness, tolerance, and compassion. At the same time, I was better able to stand up to those who browbeat me and tried to impose their values on mine. Developing a great hunger for knowledge of all kinds, I felt a whole new world of learning opening up for me.

For financial reasons I had had to leave college shortly after starting, and through the years I had blamed that fact not only for my lack of knowledge, but also for many of my other inadequacies. One of the greatest frustrations of my life was the failure to have a satisfying career. But instead of doing something about it, I had daydreamed, mostly about being a teacher of some kind, because I had always felt that I had something to offer in this world. Now I knew that I was meant to teach Yoga, to pass on the benefits that I had received to as many people as possible.

I sought out many teachers to learn as much as I could about all phases of Yoga. As I searched, I found quite a variety of Yoga teachers, some good, some bad, some indifferent, but I was able to learn something from all of them. Then I simply started to teach, developing my own methods based on the increasing benefits I have experienced. The more I teach, the more I learn, and I will never stop learning. Reaping more and more benefits through Yoga, I gradually felt the limits of what I could achieve disappear. For the first time in my life I experienced satisfaction and confidence in my work. I knew that this was only the beginning. I could attain my goals because now I knew which route to take. My greatest goal is to inform as many people as possible about Yoga. I don't believe in pressuring someone to take up Yoga, but those who are searching for a way to give meaning to their lives should know how to find it. I am aware, on the other hand, that too many people have misconceptions about Yoga and, therefore, hesitate to enrich their lives through Yoga. Every day, wherever I go, I see someone to whom I'd like to say, "Be sensible, Yoga is for you." That is why I have written this book.

CHAPTER III

YOGA: ITS MEANING AND TRADITION

Most people no longer define Yoga as preparation for lying on a bed of nails. However, there is still a great deal of confusion over what Yoga actually is. Basically, Yoga is a system of physical and mental self-improvement that people have been using for thousands of years. Its beginnings have been traced back to the Upanishads and Bhagavad Gita, both part of the ancient Sanskrit epic of Hindu philosophy called the Vedanta. The Bhagavad Gita, perhaps the most quoted of all Hindu literature, is considered by some as the Yogic bible. Around the second century B.C. the basic principles and practices of Yoga were set down in the Yoga Sutras by Patanjali, who sometimes is called the Father of Yoga.

All these works were written in Sanskrit, a sparse lan-

guage containing a minimum of words, and, therefore, open to a broad range of interpretations. Indeed, it is possible that ten different Sanskrit scholars will come up with ten different meanings of the same words. Realizing this, it is easy to understand why, although the basic Yoga principles have been preserved, there now exists a wide variety of applications. Consequently, there have arisen a multitude of Yoga societies and schools of thought, each with its own particular saint, each proclaiming to possess the true Yoga. I sincerely believe that what I teach, Common Sense Yoga, is true Yoga. It follows the classic rules of an ancient wisdom, philosophy, and science but custom tailors them for practical application to the needs of twentieth century Western civilization. Most importantly, it works effectively for me and my students.

I have gathered knowledge from all the Yoga teachers I have studied with and all the Yoga books I have read, but I have placed none on a pedestal as the ultimate authority. The true meaning of Yoga I find within myself, as you will, learning what is natural and right for you. In effect, the mark of common sense is having this ability to choose from many opinions what is best for you. People who cannot do this spend their lives floundering in a hopeless quandary. As an example, I have an acquaintance who raises her children by the book. By book, I mean the profusion of books written on child behavior. She reads them all. Not only does each author have a different opinion on child rearing but the pendulum of child psychology is constantly swinging from the extreme of discipline to permissiveness. One year it's "Spank the child," another "Don't lay a hand on him." My friend is continually applying every new theory that appears on the horizon, with the result that her children who started life as normal human beings have now been turned into neurotics.

While adapting Yoga to our present-day needs, I do not

compromise with its name and tradition. For instance, once when I applied to teach at a religious institution, I was granted permission, but with the stipulation that I call my course "Yogamatics," or some other phony title, to appease the religious leader who thought that Yoga was a religion. The course never materialized. Yoga is Yoga.

There are certain terms and ideas that will add significance and beauty to your initiation into Yoga. On the other hand, I am avoiding the complexities of Yoga philosophy and the use of tongue-twisting Sanskrit terms to describe the various postures, for at this stage, they would serve no purpose in a successful Yoga practice.

Yoga, most simply interpreted, means union, the union of the body, mind, and spirit. There are many Yogas: Hatha, Raja, Jnana, Bhakti, Karma, and Mantra, to name but a few. The ultimate goal of all these Yogas is the same—the supreme realization of self. I have chosen to concentrate on and teach only Hatha and Raja Yoga, because with a sensible amount of time and effort, these most adequately fulfill our needs.

Hatha Yoga

Hatha is the Yoga of physical culture, combining body stretching postures and regulated breathing, designed to produce the utmost flexibility, health, and vitality. The word "Hatha" comes from the Sanskrit words Ha, meaning sun, and Tha, meaning moon. It refers to the balance of these two forces, corresponding to the positive and negative forces in the body.

Calisthenics, rhythm exercises, isometrics, and dance movements are all incorporated into Hatha Yoga and, in fact, partially originated from it. Pioneers of modern dance studied Yoga and used its positions as the basis for developing their dance movements. Yoga has no quick or jerky

movements. All its exercises are executed slowly, gracefully, and thoughtfully, without straining. With Yoga you aren't expected to huff and puff to get results, which is why it is the ideal exercise for any age group.

There are the classic postures or *asanas*, often patterned after movements of different animals, and, in addition, numerous other exercises which have been developed by various Yoga teachers. Actually, any calisthenic or dance movement can become a Yoga position by being held static with proper breath control, for that is the key to Yoga practice. Almost all Yoga positions are held for a period of time in order to receive the maximum benefit from each exercise. This is one of the many reasons why Yoga is superior to other forms of exercise. By holding motionless, we allow the body to stretch naturally to its own capacity.

All we do is maintain the posture without forcing and let the body do the work of stretching unused muscles, ligaments, and tendons. This stretching and holding to our own individual capacity is what firms our muscles, makes our body more flexible, and builds up our physical endurance. As most people begin Yoga with a stiff, inflexible body, they experience an initial discomfort which soon disappears. Remember, this discomfort is natural after putting rarely used muscles to work. Rushing into an exercise can cause damage, but no damage can be done by the gradual deliberateness of Yoga that requires no more of your body than it is able to accomplish. You'll be surprised how much your body will be able to accomplish with consistent Yoga practice.

The other vital aspect of Hatha Yoga is regulated breathing. We can live without food or water for surprisingly long periods of time, but deprive us of breath for a few moments and we die. Considering this, it is amazing how little attention is given to proper breathing.

Breathing is virtually ignored by physical educators as a prerequisite of health and by medical authorities as a prevention of disease; however, I notice that in certain areas breathing is coming into its own. When respiratory illness becomes acute, as in cases of asthma, bronchitis, or emphysema, patients are often introduced to proper breathing. Also, there are advocates of natural childbirth who teach Yoga breathing to pregnant women to achieve relaxation of the pelvic muscles and nervous system during labor and childbirth. Some psychiatrists instruct patients in proper breathing to induce calmness. Unfortunately, other than these, it seems that only opera singers and method actors have been singled out to receive training in how to breathe. We're told often enough to get out in the open and take a really deep breath. But once there we're left hanging because no one has ever told us what to do with that breath and where to put it. Does it seem strange that it should be necessary to teach something as natural as breathing? Well, chances are we would not do something as natural as walking upright if we were not taught. A child raised by four-legged creatures probably would never straighten its body but would walk on all fours. Or if a child were brought up in a mute society, he would never learn to speak. Some functions are intrinsic to man; others must be acquired; and correct breathing is one of the latter.

Yoga teaches us to breathe slowly and deeply to the fullest capacity of our lungs, filtering and purifying our breath by breathing through the nose. Obviously, the deeper we breathe, the more air we inhale, the more oxygen our body receives. A greater amount of oxygen reaching the heart means a healthier and more efficient heart and entire cardiovascular system. As we breathe deeper, we must necessarily breathe slower, decreasing tension and increasing serenity: important factors to consider with the ever grow-

ing concern with heart disease. In addition, the blood is purified, resulting in a healthy skin and glowing complexion. Complete Yoga breathing also ensures an increased supply of oxygen to the brain, thus increasing mental alertness and clarity. In a society plagued by minor respiratory disorders, as evidenced by the countless products promising to relieve them, Yoga breathing offers a genuine method of attaining a healthy respiratory system. By bringing oxygen to the whole lung, the walls of the lung are cleansed of poisonous particles that are inhaled certainly important these days when experts are warning that smoking and the pollution level of our air have reached dangerous proportions.

The list of Yoga breathing exercises is practically endless, but it is neither feasible nor necessary to practice most of them. Through experimentation, I have limited the breathing exercises to those easiest to adopt and the most potent when perfected.

Marvelous as the results of Hatha Yoga are, most Eastern teachings stick Hatha Yoga on the bottom rung of the Yogic ladder, conceding that the body should be in perfect shape, but only as a condition toward perfecting the spiritual state. The Hindu in general, including certain sects of Yogis, is less concerned with the body, except as an adjunct to the spirit, because of his belief in reincarnation. He considers his body only a temporary abode for his spirit, which, to him, is far more real than his body. The soul, or self, is a complete entity, distinct from the body, experiencing neither birth nor death but inhabiting different physical forms at different times, in a series of reincarnations.

The belief in reincarnation, being reborn into a new body, so prevalent in Eastern philosophy is rejected by most Western minds. Yet there is no definitive proof against it

and I would like you to at least open your mind to the possibility that life may continue in different forms.

There are many cases on record of people who knew things they could not have learned in their present lives, and although skeptics have refuted their claims to past lives, the tantalizing possibility remains.

To the believer, reincarnation provides the answer to the age-old questions man has always asked regarding injustice and undeserved suffering in the world, for whatever man suffers in this life is his just punishment for his sins in his previous life. Because man's life is determined by his actions in past life, the tragedies and inequalities that befall him are solely of his own doing. If his present life is righteous, he will be rewarded in his next life.

In this ongoing cycle of birth, death, and rebirth, one can see how the emphasis must be placed on the soul rather than the body. The more the soul can separate itself from the body, the greater the bliss it will experience. Yoga is the means used to liberate the soul from the body. When the soul is completely liberated and reunited with the universal soul, it will have been freed once and for all from its bondage to the physical world.

However, as non-ascetic practical Westerners, we are not striving for what the Easterner considers spiritual purification. Hatha Yoga is not merely the way toward achievement, but the achievement itself. Our goal is the attainment of a healthy, youthful, relaxed body through the practice of Hatha Yoga. This, in turn, can lead us to peace of mind, because the body and the mind are one, completely interdependent. Controlling and relaxing the body through Hatha Yoga will eventually lead into Raja Yoga, the Yoga of meditation. I will discuss this method of disciplining the mind toward the path of self-realization in Chapter VI. Now I

would like to give you a brief idea of some of the other important Yogas.

Jnana Yoga

Jnana Yoga is the Yoga of the intellect, considered to be the most difficult of all Yogas, to be undertaken and mastered only by those who have achieved purity of thought by practicing the other Yogas. The sensory world and all knowledge achieved by the senses are considered an illusion. True knowledge, that is, knowledge of the soul, is sought through intellectual analysis. Past, present, and future are interwoven into timeless existence. The concept of "I" becomes meaningless. The individual self is liberated by merging with the universal Self, pure spirit, or Atman.

Bhakti Yoga

In contrast to Jnana Yoga, Bhakti Yoga seeks salvation through love. It is the devotional Yoga, offering a much more direct approach to spiritual fulfillment in this world. It resembles the practices of Western religions but requires no house of worship. The follower of Bhakti Yoga prays to God, Brahman, or Hindu deities either alone, at home, or in ceremonies with a spiritual leader. Bhakti Yoga is actually the only Yoga with which the majority of Indians are familiar.

Karma Yoga

This is the Yoga of action. The ideal of the Karma Yogi is work for the work's sake and not for the fruit of his work. Freed from desire and attachment to worldly things, he finds spiritual liberation in pure action. He alone is responsible for his actions, and through his actions he shapes his destiny, present and future. Karma Yoga appeals most

to the Westerner because it emphasizes self-realization through action.

Mantra Yoga

Mantra Yoga is the Yoga of sound and vibration. Mantras are sacred syllables used in prayer or meditation. They are repeated silently or aloud in chants or incantations. It is said that each Mantra possesses a certain psychic energy and that indefinite repetition of a Mantra endows the individual with psychic powers. It is customary for a Swami,* or Guru, to choose a special Mantra to benefit each person, according to the message he receives from the individual's vibrations. The Mantra is usually a salutation to a Hindu luminary, such as "Hare Krishna" (Hail Krishna). The secret of the Mantra is zealously guarded and must never be revealed to another person.

The boundaries between these different Yogas are not always sharp and distinct. Very often their principles and practices overlap. Basic to all Yoga is the idea of *Prana*, the life force. Essential to life, it is found in every living thing from the most elementary form of plant life to the most complex form of animal life. It is in matter, but it is not matter. It is in the air, but it is not air. It is inhaled along with oxygen, but it is not oxygen. Too subtle to be graphically pinpointed, Prana exists as surely as do electricity or cos-

* The meanings of the titles "Swami," "Guru," and "Yogi" cause a great deal of confusion. Understandably so, for they're often used interchangeably. Guru is simply the Sanskrit word for teacher. A person who practices Yoga can be called a *Yogi*, Yogin, or, a female, a *Yogini*. A *Swami* is an adherent of a spiritual order following the teachings of a particular Hindu saint or luminary; both men and women can become Swamis—most vow celibacy. The title is bestowed by another Swami, usually the teacher, together with a name of a departed saint ending in "ananda" meaning bliss Swami is also used in India as a form of address, meaning "Master" or "Patron" or "Householder."

mic rays. Its abstract quality is comparable to what is termed "the soul." The existence of a soul is commonly accepted as a spiritual part of every individual, although it cannot be seen. In the same way, we can understand the existence of Prana.

Writings of the ancient Hebrews and Greeks both referred to Prana, but it is not found in more modern Western writings. Perhaps the closest we can come to the conception of Prana is vitality. This special vitality reveals itself as a definite element of our physical and mental constitution to all who seriously practice Yoga. Even the most down-to-earth practitioner will come to accept the existence of Prana. I, who at one time was only going through the motions of living and was actually "lifeless," have become "lifeful" through Yoga.

Prana is taken into the body, along with breath, by Pranayama or Yoga breathing, which I will explain further in the chapter on meditation. Once Prana has been absorbed and its presence felt, the utmost should be done to preserve it and prevent its being wasted. The advanced Yoga student learns to store Prana in the body by locking all the openings of his body. But there are more practical ways of preserving Prana that even the beginner can carry out in the course of everyday life. These involve our thoughts and actions.

Every good and optimistic thought is an intake of Prana, just as an evil or pessimistic thought is a waste of Prana. The same applies to our actions—I'm not referring to standards set up by others, but what, in the ultimate objective analysis, constitutes what is good or bad for you. As Shakespeare said, "To thine own self be true." Many people would benefit if the Golden Rule were revised to: "Do unto yourself what you would do unto others." In other words, please yourself before you please others, for

the very good reason that you cannot truly benefit others unless you are happy with yourself. When you act without regard to your own satisfaction, you are dissipating your Prana.

We all have duties and obligations that we must fulfill. A man must work to support his family. Although at times the work may be distasteful or aggravating, he has to cope with it because he wants his family to eat. And a woman's job of raising children and doing housework is not always great fun, but it is her responsibility. However, many people take on additional jobs or duties, like chairman of the PTA or hospital volunteer, because they think they should or the community expects it. Now if you love pounding the gavel for the PTA or working with the sick, nothing could be better to utilize your spare time. On the other hand, if you suffer through the meetings in utter boredom or can't stand the sight of blood, you are defeating your own purpose of wanting to do good and you are wasting your Prana. Another waste of Prana is meaningless actions such as tapping your feet, chewing on a pencil, or doodling.

Then there are certain people who drain your reservoir of Prana if you let them. Unfortunately, sometimes you have to cope with these people, if, for instance, they happen to be your boss or mother-in-law. But everyone has acquaintances, very often neighbors, who bore and agitate us, whom we wish would vanish from our lives, but whom we put up with because we feel we should. I'm not suggesting that you insult them, throw them out bodily, or tell them off —which, by the way, does the least good—but you should make a decided effort to detach yourself from these people who are sapping your vitality. Keep this in mind in the beginning of Yoga practice. Later, after you have increased your store of Prana and gained serenity through Yoga, you will be better able to deal with these

people. Seek out and associate with those who radiate vitality, whose presence stimulates and refreshes you.

The Yogi believes that Pranic energy is preserved throughout the body in storage centers called *Chakras*, literally translated, circle or wheel. Each Chakras has a lotus flower attached. These subtle centers of consciousness are located along the spine. The six basic Chakras are at the base of the spine, at the genitals, near the navel, near the heart, near the throat, and between the eyebrows. In a category by itself is the Chakras at the top of the brain containing a thousand-petalled lotus. The ancient legendary scheme of Chakras was, no doubt, the forerunner of what is now called the autonomous nervous system, the involuntary regulator of the body.

The third Chakras is the solar plexus, referred to as the abdominal brain both by the Yogi and by modern science. It is a nerve center of the sympathetic nervous system that sends branches to and regulates all the abdominal viscera. Less than a hundred years ago the solar plexus gained a certain notoriety when boxing champion James Corbett was knocked out by a well-landed punch to his solar plexus. Often emotional reactions are described as a feeling in "the pit of the stomach" or "butterflies in the stomach."

The solar plexus is considered a major storage center of Prana from which the Yogi can draw strength, and even healing powers, to send into different directions. I'm sure that this is what has given rise to the misconception that the Yogi spends his time gazing upon his navel. The Yogi has no interest in his navel. It's the solar plexus, located in the back of the navel, that he is concentrating upon when he sits and enters into meditation.

According to Yoga legend, by intensive concentration on Chakras the Yogi awakens *Kundalini*, the coiled serpent sleeping at the base of the spine. Kundalini can be trans-

lated as spiritual energy or basic power. The intricate processes involved in arousing the Kundalini constitute a whole separate Yoga whereby the female Kundalini (a name I love to pronounce merely for the esthetic pleasure of its sound) is symbolically united with the male deity *Shiva*. Meditation on the six basic Chakras, beginning with the lowest one and moving upward, forces the Kundalini to move through a channel along the spinal cord. As she reaches each Chakras, its lotus petals open, pointing upward, until ultimately the thousand-petalled Chakras at the top of the brain is awakened. Piercing this final Chakras, the journey of the Kundalini is completed, and union with her spouse consummated.

There are many ways to interpret the Kundalini force. It represents the dormant elements in our personality, lying deep within our subconscious. Sexually, it is comparable to what Freud termed the libido, the sex urge, the psychic energy and force motivating human action, which, when released through psychoanalysis, reveals itself as the source of man's creative, emotional, and spiritual drives. Or call Kundalini latent energy that you can learn to utilize through spiritual concentration and training. It can be thought of as basic intelligence, often blocked by negative thinking, but which can be brought into the open by changing your ways of thinking. The awakening of Kundalini can also be compared to the realization of dreams and desires.

When the Kundalini bursts through the final Chakras, *Samadhi*, ecstasy, is achieved. Hindu legend says Samadhi can be experienced many times, ultimately resulting in *Nirvana*, which becomes the permanent state, with Kundalini and Shiva remaining united forever. Patanjali, however, considers the state of Samadhi as the ultimate state. In Zen Buddhism *Satori* refers to the same experience.

The way to Samadhi is through the practice of Prana-

yama and meditation, according to the teachings of Patanjali. Samadhi is the state of superconsciousness, the greatest bliss. Here the highest truth, the mystery of life and death, is revealed. Some people mistakenly believe that Samadhi is a trance induced through meditation. There are, as a matter of fact, many who can easily enter into a trance-like state this way, but it is not Samadhi. On the contrary, Samadhi is a super-awakening.

The Yogi holds that Samadhi is the prize for the one who has achieved complete spirituality, who has traded material desires for inner peace. It is the gateway to freedom of the soul. Broadly interpreted, Samadhi can be wisdom and maturity, the attainment of those virtues that lead to happiness, peace, and fulfillment.

Working toward Samadhi can be as meaningful as the achievement itself. I compare it to the striving of a truly great artist who all his life works toward perfection without regard to time.

The Japanese Sumi-e painter sometimes devotes his lifetime to the perfection of a single brush stroke. The great pianist Artur Rubinstein at the age of eighty-one said, "Someday before I die, I hope to be able to play Beethoven's Fourth Symphony the way Beethoven would have wanted me to play it." This is not false modesty. It means that a true artist never reaches that moment when he cries out, "I am perfect." But by working toward perfection, he achieves much. Without actually attaining Samadhi, you can improve yourself and accomplish your goals. Therein lies peace and happiness.

CHAPTER IV

YOGA: WHAT IT CAN DO FOR YOU

Now you have an idea of what Yoga's all about. It's not some here today, gone tomorrow exercise fad. It's been bringing results for quite a while, centuries, as a matter of fact. I will explain exactly how it will work for you.

Before people enroll in my course they usually ask all kinds of questions about what Yoga can do for them. "Can it help me lose weight?" "Can it get rid of this pot belly? This dowager's hump? This spare tire? This dragged out tired look? This slump? Flab? Sag? Bulge? Droop?"

"Yes," I say. "Yes, Yoga can." But what they're really asking is, "Can Yoga make me look the way I want to look?" And how does everyone want to look? Beautiful, of course.

Beauty is many things. And pretty features alone don't

always add up to beauty. Granted they help, but there are many beautiful women who possess eyes, a nose, and a mouth which are less than perfect. What does make a woman beautiful or a man handsome? A straight firm body, a graceful way of moving, a poised natural manner, smooth glowing skin, a pleasant voice, and that sparkling aliveness that we call vitality. With these qualities a plain person can outshine someone more kindly endowed by nature. These are the very qualities that can be acquired by practicing Yoga exercises.

To the novice, the long list of benefits to be derived from Yoga may seem unbelievable. As you gain experience in Yoga, you will see that these promises can be confirmed by common sense. I can personally vouch for all the benefits I have listed, through both my own experience and the experiences of my students and other practitioners of Yoga I've known. My list would be even longer if I weren't disregarding those claims that I've only read or heard about. I'm sticking strictly to what I've seen.

Weight Control

Invariably beginners in Yoga ask, "Can I lose weight through Yoga exercises?" The only truthful answer is, "You can lose weight only through good eating habits." There is no other way. But if the question is, "Can Yoga *help* me to lose weight?" the answer is, "Most definitely, yes." Yoga exercises alone will not make the pounds roll off, but they will set off the weight loss and help the body maintain its proper weight. Most overeating is due to nervousness and tension. Many people will eat themselves into a mountain when they are excited and agitated. People of different metabolism are affected the opposite. Overly thin people are that way because when their nerves are on edge they can't eat and the little food they do consume is worked off

in nervous energy. Yoga helps both these types of people. By practicing the exercises, breathing, and eventual meditation, you lose nervousness and stress, thereby eliminating the compulsion both to stuff yourself and starve yourself.

It stands to reason that overweight is a great handicap to successful practice of Hatha Yoga, but that does not mean that all thin people are limber and all heavy people inflexible. Many thin people are stiff as a board when they begin Yoga, and many overweight people move with agility. In general, of course, it is quite difficult to bend across a mountain of flesh when it's all concentrated in the abdominal region as is usually the case with the majority of people, especially those approaching middle age. Superfluous fat is unattractive on any part of the body, and a protruding belly is not only very unsightly but also a great health hazard. This extra fatty tissue puts an added strain on the heart and also interferes with the healthy functioning of the other organs. A flat belly is a sign of health and youthfulness.

Yoga exercises tighten the abdominal muscles as the fat breaks down and melts away something which weight loss in itself cannot achieve. The Locust, Bow, and Abdominal Lift, plus slowly raising and lowering both legs in a lying down position such as in the Shoulderstand, are especially effective for firming the abdominal muscles.

Too often, overweight people become discouraged because their excess weight is an obstacle in performing the exercises. They come up with all kinds of excuses why they have to discontinue the course, or they promise, "I'll return if I lose 20 or 50 pounds." I listen to their rationalizations, their promises of good intentions, but I know I will never see them again. Too bad, because they don't give themselves a chance. Marian was one of the exceptions. She was

a woman in her forties, with a pretty face but the proportions of a hippopotamus. A rough estimate would put her weight somewhere around 250 pounds. My heart sank as I watched her attempt the exercises with much huffing, puffing, and perspiring. Fearing the strain on her heart, I could only caution her not to overdo. She never missed a single lesson. After the course was finished, she re-enrolled in the ensuing courses. She still huffed, puffed, and sweated profusely, but her agility had increased to such an extent that she was able to perform the most advanced postures as well as the skinny girls could. It was amazing to watch her, because she defied all the laws of probability. She had gained agility and firm muscle tone but, as far as I could tell, had lost no weight.

During my classes, I discuss various pertinent subjects, among them proper nutrition and weight control, but Marian and I never discussed the subject between ourselves. I'm always available to students who wish to talk over something private with me, but Marian never approached me on the subject of losing weight. Often tempted to bring up the subject, I never did because I knew there was no sense suggesting she lose weight when she wasn't ready to. Incentive for self-improvement must come from within—it can't be imposed from without. Often the sense of accomplishment that comes from practicing Yoga sparks the desire for still further achievement, as it did with Marian.

After practicing Hatha and Raja Yoga eight months in my course, she moved away. Once she wrote me that she was continuing to exercise on her own. Not too long after that I had a visitor in my class who looked familiar but whom I couldn't quite place. It was Marian back on a visit. She looked marvelous. The reason I hadn't recognized her was that she had lost 100 pounds. By patiently continuing Yoga,

but not driving herself, she gradually and naturally had found the incentive to lose weight. To help her along, she'd joined a dieting group.

Marian is one person who will keep her excess weight off, because in Yoga she found a substitute for gluttony. How many times have you heard dieters complain, "Taking weight off isn't the problem, it's keeping it off." Theirs is a nerve-wracking battle with excess weight that's like a Yo-Yo: first it's up, then down, up again, down, and so it goes. As you lose weight in conjunction with Yoga exercises, the struggle is not so discouragingly uphill all the way. As I mentioned, many of the tensions that cause compulsive eating—that constant nibbling, that insatiable appetite for something more—are relieved. In addition, the more you do the Yoga exercises the more the desire for huge quantities of food and for heavy fattening food decreases. Your body, beginning to get into shape, doesn't want to be burdened with a lot of heavy food, with the result that your willpower is bolstered immeasurably.

I was quite heavy as a child and part of adolescence, but by the time I was eighteen I'd become fed up with the boys treating me as their chubby pal. With what seemed heroic self-denial I managed to lose most of the excess weight in an effort to transform myself into a femme fatale. Fortunately for me, at that time our standards of shapeliness were set by the proportions of Betty Grable rather than Twiggy. After that, I never did regain what was kindly referred to as baby fat, but I was always fifteen to twenty pounds above my present weight. Now I am slim but certainly not skinny. As I became more and more serious about Yoga, my weight loss occurred not so much because I wanted to lose weight but because I actually desired less food. I no longer wanted to eat a lot of rich starchy foods, because they settled uncomfortably heavy in my stomach and interfered

with the proper execution of most exercises. It is preferable to start out doing Yoga without the hindrance of extra poundage, but those who begin overweight and stick with Yoga will most assuredly gain the incentive to lose weight. And once they've lost those extra pounds, Yoga will help keep the pounds off.

Well-Proportioned Figure

Those who ask, "Can I lose inches by doing Yoga? Can I develop a more beautiful figure? Can I become better proportioned?" I answer with an emphatic "Yes."

A lot of people start Yoga because they want to get rid of a certain bulge here or there. They ask me to teach them only exercises for that particular area of the body. What they have in mind is spot reducing. Judging from the ads, usually found in the women's magazines, the market is filled with slenderizing salons to achieve miraculous spot reducing. I had firsthand experience with the effectiveness of an electrical massage machine at a health club once when I was trying to reduce unsightly fat on my outer thighs. After three months of religious devotion to that machine I had worked off the bulge. It had disappeared from my thighs completely—only now it had settled higher, increasing the dimensions of my already opulent hips. Which left me only to chalk up another plus for common sense. Instant gimmicks are no substitute for overall effort.

There are Yoga exercises that direct attention to certain parts of the body, such as the Arm Roll for upper arms, the Standing Twist for the waist, and the Pelvic Stretch for the hips. However, effective spot reducing—and when I say effective, I mean that the bulge is gone from your body, not merely pushed somewhere else to cause aggravation is accomplished by working the entire body and not excluding any area, even those areas you happen to be proud of.

With overall Yoga exercises you get the special bonus of not only eliminating a specific ugly bulge but of streamlining the entire body. Provide your body with proper exercise, and it will rehabilitate itself. It will set to work intelligently to achieve its proper proportions. It will know where to subtract superfluous inches and where to add required inches.

Yoga can't accomplish miracles. It can't make a tall person short, for instance. But, with intensive stretching, it can make a short person a little taller, as was joyfully reported to me by Irene, one of my students who grew from five feet to five feet one inch after a year of Yoga. Irene had not particularly concentrated on adding to her height, but in the process of doing all the exercises she had gained an inch lengthwise.

Most people aren't so much concerned with adding inches lengthwise or widthwise as they are in subtracting them or pushing them around to end up with the right proportions. I used to be the classic example of the out-of-proportion figure, with the most generous share of bulk in my hips, buttocks, and thighs. Anyone similarly proportioned knows what a hard time I had finding clothes to fit me. And once I did find something to fit me, the way I looked in it was nothing to brag about. I wore slacks only when absolutely necessary, and skirts didn't look much better on me. Before starting Yoga I wore a size 14 top and size 16 bottom, graduating to a size 12 top and 14 bottom and finally achieving the status of a perfect size 8, including skirts and slacks. After my initial weight loss, I did not lose another pound. I weigh 120 pounds and am five feet four inches, yet I am considered petite—quite a change from someone who used to be referred to as "that big girl."

Yoga enables the body to mold its basic structure with an innate sense of loveliness.

Firm Muscle Tone

An attractive body is a firm one. Young and firm is a descriptive twosome that inevitably go together just as old and flabby do. Firm muscle tone, without unattractive bulging muscles, is achieved by Yoga's method of stretching the muscles, holding them motionless, and slowly releasing them. Muscles are there to be used. The more they're used the better shape they're in. But when less and less demand is made on our muscles, as is the case today when people's activities consist mainly of riding, sitting, and turning dials, the muscles deteriorate. They lose their resiliency and get flabby. And let me say a word to the housewife who's indignant because she's probably reading this after spending the entire day on her feet, cleaning, cooking, ironing, and getting what she considers plenty of exercise. Maybe no one can accuse you of inactivity, but that doesn't mean your muscles are getting the proper exercise. In housework very often muscles receive the wrong kind of exercise and many muscles are neglected altogether. The same applies to a great deal of physical labor done by men. Yoga provides beneficial exercises aimed at all muscle groups, even those rarely used. Some exercises are overall firmers, such as the Headknee Bend and the Complete Leg Stretch. Others concentrate on neglected areas, such as the Arm Roll for correcting flabby upper arms and Side Stretch for firming muscles on the side of the body. Remember, it's always easier to keep a machine in good condition than it is to repair it after it's been damaged. And that especially applies to the human body.

If you've been carrying out a steady program of swimming, for example, you're probably in good shape. You'll enjoy doing the Yoga exercises to keep firm. But if your muscles are losing their elasticity, causing your body to age

much sooner than it should, right now is an excellent time to counter the effects of time through Yoga. I'm not promising that Yoga will make a forty-five-year-old woman look like an eighteen-year-old girl, but it will certainly promote a youthful face and figure.

Often people who consider themselves overweight appear much slimmer once their bodies have firmed up, eliminating the necessity to lose large amounts of weight. And if you are dieting, Yoga exercises help keep the skin from sagging while the pounds drop off.

Whatever your age, Yoga can keep your body in its best condition.

Healthy Skin

Women spend millions of dollars annually on creams and lotions that promise them beautiful, radiant complexions. They could save themselves a lot of money, time, and disappointment if they would only realize that what goes on top of their skin is less important than what is going on beneath it. The most effective cosmetic for a glowing healthy-looking complexion is good circulation, enriching the tissues of the skin and eliminating toxins that cause skin eruptions. Many of the Yoga positions practiced in conjunction with proper breathing are designed to do that by stimulating circulation and purifying the blood. Especially effective are the inverted positions, such as the Headstand, Headknee Bend, and Shoulderstand, and all the breathing techniques.

Erica, who had pretty features but a sallow dull complexion no makeup could hide, is a good example of the effects of Yoga on the skin. It was only a short time after she had started Yoga lessons that she told me, very pleased with herself, "People have been telling me how well I've been looking lately." I wasn't surprised. The change was

obvious to anyone who looked at her face, for Erica's once unattractive complexion now had a beautifully healthy glow to it.

Physical well-being is the world's greatest cosmetic. I'm not forgetting good diet, which is essential for healthy skin, but I'll get to that in another chapter.

Good Posture

Did you ever admire a beautiful girl sitting down and then watch her get up and shuffle away, hunching her back and dangling her arms? Didn't her physical beauty and appeal slip away with every step she took? Or did you ever observe someone who sat, stood, and walked erectly and gracefully, who did not really possess extraordinary beauty or an ideal figure but was able to create an impression of both through perfect posture? Think of an older person you know who looks younger than his age. Isn't it his straight back that makes the difference? Not only does he look younger, he most likely feels younger, acts younger, and is healthier than his stooped contemporary. Yes, good posture goes hand-in-glove with beauty and youthfulness. And the key to good posture is a strong healthy spine, one of the prime objectives of Yoga exercises.

As man evolved from a creature that supported his spine on all fours to one that walked upright, his spine did not strengthen sufficiently to always bear comfortably the burden of the upright body. That is probably why we are so prone to backaches. Women, especially, suffer from backaches and spinal maladies, because of the additional strain that results from carrying their babies in a vertical position during pregnancies and after birth carrying them in their arms. We do seem at last to be learning from primitive tribeswomen that carrying a baby on the back helps prevent spinal disorders and sagging abdominal muscles. More

and more smart mothers are using the devices on the market that facilitate transporting baby papoose style.

I've observed that in most European countries more attention is paid to developing healthy spines in the young than in America. German schoolchildren, for instance, as well as children in other parts of Europe, carry their school books in a satchel on their back, use a knapsack to carry anything heavy, and, in school, are required to do exercises to strengthen their back muscles. In this country the commendable habit of carrying school books on the back seems to have vanished with the bustle. Pictures of bygone days show children walking to school with their book straps slung over their shoulders, in contrast to today's children who hunch over heavy books carried in their arms. I hope that, one of these days, parents and educators will take measures to correct this seemingly innocuous habit which I have no doubt is impairing the posture and general health of our children.

My father had the Germanic fervor for good posture. He was quite short, but by constantly holding himself erect, he gave an illusion of height. He had a favorite saying that contains much truth, "One cannot think straight unless one walks straight." Unfortunately, he carried his passion for good posture to the point of obsession, incessantly nagging me to stand straight. As so often happens, his constant haranguing produced exactly the opposite effect. To defy him, I turned into a slump. It seems that all my life there was some well-meaning soul who slapped me on the back and told me to straighten up—and whom I could have cheerfully killed. My already poor posture became even worse with my back injury, aggravating and slowing down the healing process.

But where everything else had failed, Yoga succeeded. First of all, all the sitting and standing exercises begin with

the head, neck, and spine in a straight line. This is useful to remember any time you want to check on your posture. By straight line, I don't mean rigid as the guards at Buckingham Palace. Keep straight but relaxed. The person who tries to maintain good posture by keeping his shoulders and spine constantly stiff is putting added strain on his back. Secondly, many Yoga exercises concentrate on strengthening the spine - for example, the Alternate Leg Stretch, the Plough and Twist, Dancer's Pose, and Shoulderstand. The stronger your spine is, the easier it is to maintain good posture. The third way Yoga helps with posture is a subtle one. Yoga makes great use of the imagination. As you're doing the exercises, you're expected to think of yourself as beautiful, moving with grace, standing tall. I'd say it's nearly impossible to think of yourself in those terms and still slouch.

Gradually, good posture has become a natural habit with me, as I have seen it become with many of my students. I wish I could tell you that, after forty years of slouching, I've completely transformed myself and stand, sit, and walk straight at all times. But to be perfectly honest, once in a while I do catch myself reverting to sloppy posture, because it takes time to undo a habit the body has spent decades establishing. However, correction is a simple matter of reminding myself, and I'm straight again. I'd say most people's poor posture is a habit. Once Yoga has enabled the body to establish the habit of good posture, you'll find it much easier to rid yourself of the habit of bad posture.

Flexibility

A flexible body is a young body. The Yogi knew that he could slow down the effects of time on his body by emphasizing exercises that would maintain flexibility. An old body moves stiffly, a young one with fluidity and ease. The

difference between the two lies primarily in the flexibility of the spine and joints. Men in general are much less flexible than women, even if they are young athletic men—sometimes because they are athletic. Athletic men often put too much emphasis on developing only certain parts of the body, especially the muscles in the arms and shoulders, while allowing other areas to become stiff with age.

Because flexibility is so dependent upon the elasticity of the spine Yoga concentrates on gradually stretching the spine in all directions with a variety of positions. Exercises like the Standing and Sitting Twists give the spine a corkscrew kind of workout. The Alternate Leg Stretch and the Plough, for instance, stretch it forward, the Bow and the Camel backward. Notice I said gradually. The first few times you do an exercise like the Alternate Leg Stretch you'll probably think your spine isn't responding at all. It is, but little by little. Each time you work out your spine, it gives, and regains more youthful elasticity. The degree of spinal stiffness is an indication of how badly it needed the exercise. Fortunately, the spine is constructed in such an ingenious fashion, with each vertebra hinged to the next, that it can become resilient once again regardless of its age and rigidity. But continuous systematic exercise is essential.

In addition to spinal flexibility, Yoga emphasizes flexibility of the legs. Probably the position that comes to most people's minds, when they think of Yoga, is the familiar cross-legged Lotus Seat, so effective for loosening up rigid leg muscles. It's been my observation that the leg muscles are stiffer than the spine and take more time to limber. The most rigid joints in the adult body tend to be those in the knees, where mineral deposits are prone to build up. Exercising the knee joints breaks down these deposits, allowing the blood to flow through the area naturally. The stiffest

tendons seem to be the hamstrings at the back of the knees, as you will soon learn at your first attempts to exercise them. Don't be discouraged; the initial discomfort is natural and will soon pass.

I have found that the time spent in achieving the Lotus depends on an individual's bone and body structure. Some students who otherwise may be stiff can attain the Lotus position easily in a short time. However, the majority have to put great effort, usually accompanied by much creaking and groaning, into the preliminary exercises such as the Leg Bounce, and the Thigh Stretch that I teach to limber the legs. I am most sympathetic but optimistically persistent, for if I, who owned the stiffest pair of knees to ever attempt the Lotus Seat, could achieve it, so can anyone. Time limits should be forgotten. Remember you're receiving benefits from working toward the position even before you've actually achieved it. It may take as much as a year to attain total flexibility of the legs, but you'll find it well worth the effort. Not only does the Lotus put new bounce in your legs but it shapes them into lovelier contours.

With every passing day the Yoga positions, which at first looked like impossible acrobatics, become easier. When the first suggestion of resiliency inevitably appears, there comes the feeling that what seemed hopeless to achieve at the start is, after all, possible. To those with patience and persistence go the rewards of Yoga. Flexibility cannot be obtained overnight, once it's been lost, but everyone, regardless of age, sex, or the stiffness of his body, can become as supple as a child.

Grace

The most eloquent evidence that Yoga leads to grace is the fact that many of my students ask if I used to be a professional dancer. I am very flattered but must answer truth-

fully, without false modesty, "I used to be a professional klutz."

In a photograph of me at age seven taken in ballet school, I am completely hidden by the other children, except for my face sticking out, because the ballet instructor was ashamed to show me. With good reason. I looked like a baby elephant in a tutu. And I danced like one. In school gymnastics, which were taken most seriously in Germany, I was an utter disgrace because of my clumsiness. As an adolescent, I never pursued any of the sports my parents had forced me to learn—swimming, bicycling, ice skating, tennis—because of the way I looked performing them. With time, I lost some of these adolescent inhibitions. While not exactly cutting a sporting figure on the skating rink or tennis court, I learned to laugh at myself. Not very heartily, I admit, but gamely. I had resigned myself to gracelessness. Yoga, however, operates on the assumption that the body is meant to move with grace. This applies not only to women but equally to men. Rather than detracting from manliness, grace adds to it. The exercises are a series of graceful movements, gracefully executed. Again your imagination is called into play. As you perform the exercises, think of your motions as flowing gracefully. This ease of movement will indeed become a reality as your body loses its stiffness. Exercises like the Dancer's Pose and the Basic Stretch train your body for grace. You'll notice how these and other Yoga positions resemble dance movements. Actually, every Yoga position can be made into a dance movement and every dance movement can become a Yoga position. No doubt, this is why those of my students who have had previous training as dancers can naturally execute most Yoga positions. However, it isn't necessary to be a dancer, for even those who walk into Yoga with two left feet can learn to move beautifully.

Poise

Poise is grace plus self-assurance. In Yoga we sit, stand, and move with poise until it becomes part of us. The physical poise of the body eventually results in dignity and ease of manner in dealing with people. It is easily recognized and appreciated by others, because those who possess it radiate an aura of calmness, favorably affecting whomever they come in contact with. The slow and sometimes languid movements in Yoga, combined with the stretchings and balancing of such positions as Simple Fish, Dancer's Pose, Shoulderstand, and Headstand, all foster poise. In addition, the confidence we gain as we attain the more difficult poses leads to more poise.

Coordination

It is taken for granted that coordination makes the difference between mediocrity and excellence in any sport. However, good coordination is a factor that affects how well and efficiently we perform any physical task, including driving a car, playing the piano, or wallpapering the bathroom. Most people believe that, like freckles, you either have it or you don't, and there's not much you can do about it. The Yogi doesn't take such a negative view of coordination, or for that matter, any physical attribute. The body was designed by nature for good coordination; therefore, if the body is lacking this quality, Yoga will lead the body back to coordination.

When I jumped out of the window during the fire, I landed feet first. I am positive that had I had Yoga training at that time I would have been able to guide my fall to minimize my injuries. I had always had poor coordination, yet today I can execute some of the most difficult Yoga positions bordering on acrobatics. Not only can I get into them but I

am able to remain motionless in them for some time. (See illustrations at the end of the book.) I cannot think of any Yoga exercise that does not produce coordination, the most effective being the balancing exercise like the Dancer's Pose and the Basic Stretch, and the Headstand.

Symmetry

Yoga also helps restore physical symmetry. It may come as a surprise to some people to learn that their bodies are uneven. For instance, if you have ever gone to a chiropractor you may have been greatly alarmed to have heard that one of your legs is shorter than the other or one shoulder higher than the other. If so, you're not unique, because everyone's right and left sides are different. The chiropractor attempts to restore symmetry through manipulations. So does Yoga. During the Yoga exercises these imbalances become especially evident, because everyone discovers it is more difficult to assume and maintain the positions on one particular side than on the other. Exercising the entire body, we can concentrate on the side that needs most attention, correcting the imbalance.

Pleasing Voice

Often a person is summed up in the description: "She was pretty until she opened her mouth to talk." A pleasant speaking voice influences more than we realize the impression we make on others. People who knew me before I started Yoga tell me that the quality of my speaking voice has changed, that it has become softer and more melodious. I attribute this to the stimulation of the vocal chords by the Complete Breath, Bellows Breathing, and the other breathing exercises. In the past I had never submitted my fellow man to my singing. Now, although I doubt that I ever will be competition for Joan Sutherland, I can try Yogic chants before my class without causing my students pain.

Vitality

The most attractive people we know are vibrant and alive. They're ready to tackle anything, can accomplish more in a day than some people can in a week, enjoy life to its fullest, and glow with what seems to be a never diminishing supply of energy. Unfortunately, too many people never have enough energy and don't know how to increase their supply.

Physical energy is usually equated with strength, which, in turn, is confused with bulging muscles and the ability to lift great weights. But intensive muscle development and weight lifting don't serve too much purpose in everyday life except to a boxer and weight lifter. What, then, is energy? Energy is power. Put in human terms, energy is the power that enables the body to function at a high capacity without undue fatigue. Really, energy should be equated with staying power or stamina.

In Yoga we strive for a body strong in stamina. The same way that we can make energy through chemical changes, we can produce energy in the body through physical change. Yoga, more than any other form of exercise, can produce this energy most efficiently and with the least amount of strain to the individual. Everyone has potential energy stored within his body which does not release itself but requires definite effort to set it to work. Yoga stretchings, manipulations, and breathing release this untapped energy, thereby vastly increasing one's endurance and vigor. We are provided with a steady stream of energy that carries over into our work and all other activities.

I realize it sounds incongruous to the Westerner that the slow gentle movements of Yoga can increase vitality. We've been brought up with the misconception that any exercise that doesn't exhaust you isn't doing you any good. I am of the opinion that any exercise or sport which produces ex-

cessive strain or fatigue is not only ineffective but harmful. Yoga believes in conserving energy. It just doesn't make sense to expand huge amounts of energy in order to gain energy. Yoga exercises are designed to enable the body to produce more energy while retaining the supply it already has. In this way the body is fortified with reserves of energy, available when they're needed.

Let me differentiate between the steady flowing quality of Yoga energy and the sporadic bursts of so-called nervous energy. Caffeine, alcohol, and sugar may all give you a quick lift, artificially stimulating the body for a short time. But the energy gained from these sources wears off soon, often leaving undesirable side effects. The same is true, to an even greater extent, with "pep pills," which leave a person feeling even more tired after the stimulation wears off. So he swallows another one, feels supercharged for the six, eight, or ten hours the drug is effective, and then comes the inevitable letdown. Gradually, he becomes dependent on the pill for his energy and feels he cannot function without it. In differing degrees, these artificial stimulants are all jarring the system and the system reacts with increased tension, insomnia, and often serious malfunctioning. Also, these people who are in a perpetual state of being "souped-up" may talk and move a lot, producing much sound and fury, but usually accomplish much less than the people who quietly move through life with an even flow of energy.

Most of us are aware of how tension drains our energy. Attacking tension with tranquilizers again only produces a temporary artificial effect without solving the problem. Stretching and breathing away your tension with Yoga releases the energy that has been pent up and immobilized by stress. With less tension we're better able to handle the annoyances and frustrations that beset all of us in our work and relationships with others. Using less energy to cope

with these situations, we're conserving more energy for our storehouse of vitality.

Our body can be quickly refortified with Yoga in much the same way a battery is recharged. In cases of tiredness and mental fatigue after a hard day's work, ten minutes of Yoga can act as a complete revitalizer. Particularly effective are the Bellows Breath, Complete Breath, Abdominal Breath, Basic Stretch, Shoulderstand, Cobra, and Headstand. Anyone who learns to stretch out on the floor in the Complete Relaxation, instead of flopping on a bed or couch when tired, will experience an immediate return of energy. Yoga exercises stimulate us to greater capacities of physical and mental achievements. We perform better, for longer periods of the day, without getting tired, adding years to our active life.

Sleep

It stands to reason that no one can be bursting with vitality without adequate sleep. And all too often it's hardest to get a good night's sleep when you need it most. There are even times when the quality of a person's sleep is so poor that even after sleeping for hours, he wakes up feeling tired as he did when he got into bed. This is because the body and mind are still keyed up with the day's activities. You haven't given them a chance to unwind. You may not even know how to go about doing that. Inexplicable, but true, is the fact that the same exercises and methods of relaxation that provide extra energy also promote sound sleep by "unwinding" your body and mind. Practicing the Cobra and Pranayama before bedtime are especially conducive to sleep. When you improve the quality of your sleep you actually require less, because the sleep you do get is completely restful.

One of the modern health myths of our society is that

adults require eight hours of sleep. Some people do need that much, or more, but for many people, six hours, or even less, of deep sleep is completely adequate. I used to be always tired, with never enough sleep, no matter how much I slept. Waking up tired, I would drag myself around until my afternoon nap. At night I couldn't fall asleep. In the morning I couldn't wake up—a vicious cycle which was aggravated by barbiturates. One of the benefits evident to me after only a short time of serious Yoga practice was the ability to fall asleep immediately, wake completely rested, and function longer on less sleep. Any poor sleeper who practices Yoga will find himself freed from the debilitating cycle of not being able to fall asleep at night, waking up tired, in the evening being too tired and tense to fall asleep, waking up still more tired, and so on to exhaustion. Yoga will make it possible for you to fall asleep with no trouble and wake thoroughly refreshed.

The benefits I've listed are not added separately like beads on a string, each one separate from the other. Rather, the effects of Yoga are cumulative. Take flexibility, for instance. As you gain flexibility, your posture improves; at the same time so does your grace, poise, balance, and coordination.

No magic genie is going to pop out and bestow these benefits on you. You'll have to work for them, but once you get started, you'll want to continue. Your own body will insist that you keep at it. Consistency will pay off. You'll reap the benefits of your diligence with dividends in beauty.

CHAPTER V

YOGA AND INDIA

The exotic East has always fascinated Westerners as a land of mysterious cults and the fount of ancient wisdom. If the answer to life were to be found in any geographical location, surely it would be in the remote peaks of the Himalayas. Those who have gone to India have been both attracted and repelled by that vast land. They have admired its lavish palaces, its remarkable diversity, the graceful sari-clad women, and the most beautiful building ever constructed to memorialize a man's love for woman, the Taj Mahal. They have also been appalled at its backwardness, poverty, filth, and apparent callousness toward the teeming masses who are born, live out their whole lives, and die on the streets. Through the centuries this interest in India

has not subsided. Today this fascination seems to have reached a peak not only in the United States, but in England, France, and much of Western Europe.

Indian influence has made itself felt in fashion, music, and art. Nehru jackets are flattering to young and old, male and female. The sumptuous, often gold-embroidered, fabrics worn by the upper-class Indian women have been used by designers of Western haute couture. I've even noticed that some of the high fashion models are wearing caste marks. And while the sitar has not replaced the guitar in popularity, its piercing Indian music is finding a wide audience.

Yoga is included in the current wave of interest in Indian culture that has swept this country. At first, it was presented to the public as a mysterious Indian cult, and the layman was led to believe that to be a Yogi or serious Yoga student one had to rush off to India to lie at the feet of a bearded and beaded Guru, or wear Indian clothes, engage in Indian rites, and practice Yoga in a room with burning incense. Books on Hatha Yoga were illustrated with pictures of supple Indian youths twisted around like pretzels in positions usually reserved for acrobats. Most Americans found nothing in Yoga books relevant to their daily lives.

Then the Indian Gurus tuned in to the turned on generation. They attracted thousands of young people who were looking for a spiritual experience in a world that seemed to offer only materialism. Public idols in the entertainment world pilgrimaged to India for the sake of their inner beings –greatly adding to Yoga's publicity. Yoga began to take on the aspects of a three-ring circus or an evangelical tent meeting, its basic principles becoming distorted in the process.

Out of all this has emerged the legend that India is the land where one finds peace and spiritual fulfillment. Like the hero of Hermann Hesse's *Siddartha*, written for an

earlier generation engulfed by materialism, today's youth long to go to that sacred river and free their souls from bondage. They have been led to believe that the practitioner of Yoga can achieve true self-realization nowhere but in India. The detractors of Yoga also point to India. Their argument goes something like this: If Yoga is so wonderful, why is India in such miserable condition? Yoga stresses peace, yet India is known for its wild eruptions of violence. Yoga emphasizes the spiritual, but the old maharajahs and nabobs amassed material riches with a cupidity that puts our robber barons to shame. The body should be cared for and properly nourished, according to the teachings of Yoga, but the Indian masses are sickly and undernourished, with an average life expectancy barely over forty. The very word Yoga means union, but India is so divided by remnants of its caste system and political factionalism that its collapse as a united democratic nation appears imminent. Both the scoffers and the disciples share the delusion that Yoga and India are synonymous. It is true that Yoga originated in India, but that was thousands of years ago when India was in its golden age of culture. Beautiful cities were constructed, many with better sewage systems than modern Indian cities have. A thriving civilization built universities that became centers for literature, philosophy, medicine, and art. Yoga doctrines were an embodiment of the highest knowledge and ethics of the period. But then India became the victim of a series of conquerors and her ancient glory became merely a memory. Since India was granted its independence in 1947 it has been desperately trying to improve itself, but is shackled by conditions that have been accumulating for centuries: extreme poverty, a rapidly expanding population surpassing its food supply, mass illiteracy, and a way of life that in some areas has not moved forward for two thousand years.

The only connection Yoga has with present-day India

is historical and has no influence on its contemporary life. India's burgeoning masses, struggling to eke out a few cents a day on which to exist, do not live by the precepts of Yoga but by religion, primarily Hinduism. Hinduism forbids the slaughtering of cows, leaving these creatures, often starving and diseased, to roam freely through both city and country eating crops, spreading disease, and being a general nuisance. It also perpetuates the caste system with its degradation of the untouchables. Although the Indian government has legally granted this group an equal place in society, the ancient restrictions still prevail. The vast majority of Indians are ignorant of the principles and practices of Hatha Yoga. As a matter of fact, the Indian authorities asked Sir Paul Dukes, an eminent British authority on Yoga who was living in India, to teach Hatha Yoga in hospitals and schools to Indians who knew nothing about it.

If the way of India's salvation does lie in Yoga, the Indians are not aware of it. There are true Yoga teachers in India, but they are not missionaries spreading the gospel. The principles of Yoga forbid it. They must wait for the people to come to them. Yoga is not a way of life that can be imposed on anyone; it must chosen. There is a Yoga saying to the effect that the student who wishes to learn the ways of Yoga will find the teacher. Many legends tell of the Yoga student and Yoga Guru who have never seen each other but at first confrontation immediately recognize that they were meant for each other. From that moment on, the student becomes a devoted disciple of the Guru. In circumstances much less dramatic, each person decides for himself to follow the ways of Yoga. The Indian people are not even in the position of being able to choose.

Yet, the idea that every Indian is a Yoga expert seems to be all-pervading. About a year ago when the students at the university my daughter Carolyn attended became quite in-

terested in Yoga, the university imported an Indian Yoga teacher. The Yoga teacher turned out to be, in my daughter's words, two "fuddy-duddy, roly-poly" maiden ladies who knew a great deal about Indian cooking but little about Yoga. The university would have kindheartedly kept them as cooks, but it turned out that their papers were not in order, and they had to return to India. There are some excellent bona fide Indian Yoga teachers in this country but there are also those hired only on the strength of their nationality rather than their ability.

The expectation that India is a country of aspiring and accomplished Yogis and the discovery that it is not often disappoint both the casual tourist and those who travel there for the sake of their souls. Most visitors to India never see a true Yogi. There are Buddhist monks, Hindu Swamis, and those who call themselves Yogis swarming the countryside proclaiming riches, happiness, and fulfillment in the next life in exchange for food and alms. The poorest of the poor generously share their food and possessions with them. I read about one misguided American flower child who went to India to see the Guru, became disenchanted, and ran out of funds. With his flowing hair and beard and the addition of a begging bowl, he was able to pose as a holy man and beg his way to the nearest city. There are also the fakirs, performing incredible stunts for money, who are usually confused with Yogis. Anyone who understands the Yogic way of life would never mistake these dirty emaciated men, their long hair and beards matted and disheveled, for Yogis. True, the fakir can control his body and perform incredible stunts, such as lying on a bed of nails and walking on glass. He will show you his arm that he has held up until it has withered. He may even demonstrate how he can be buried for an unbelievable period of time and still emerge from his grave alive.

He does all this for money. Like the carnival sword swallower or geek, the fakir is a professional stunt man and is regarded with repugnance by the true Yogi.

The true spiritual Yogi can perform these same feats, for he has trained his body and mind to master nature, but he never pursues the physical performance as a means in itself. Never would he perform publicly for money or acclaim, for he trains his body only in order to liberate his soul. When I use the term Yogi in this book I mean the true spiritual Yogi. They believe in and live by all the rules of Yoga: cleanliness, austerity, non-violence, non-injury, truthfulness, spirituality, and self-knowledge. There are not many, but some do still exist in isolated regions, living spare ascetic lives mostly in the Himalayas or mountains of Tibet. These Yogis maintain themselves in fairly primitive conditions, dwelling in stark shelters, bathing in icy rivers, eating the smallest portions of food necessary for their health. They do not descend into the world except on rare occasions, when they feel they have an important message to deliver. Then they come without fanfare.

Otherwise, those sincerely in search of peace and fulfillment must seek them out in their isolated mountain retreats. To become a Yogi under the guidance of these teachers means following rigid rules and discipline for many months. One has to withstand great hardship and practice self-denial that very few can endure, Indians and Westerners included. You might find it interesting to read the accounts of two Westerners who did submit themselves to the grueling training demanded of the true spiritual Yogi. They were Sir Paul Dukes, mentioned previously, and Dr. Theos Bernard, tragically killed in the Himalayas.

India, as well as some other countries, has what are known as Yoga ashrams. These are retreats run on a non-profit, communal basis with the members working together,

sharing in the maintenance. Different Yoga societies operate ashrams all over the world for the practice of various kinds of Yoga. A businessman, say, who practices Yoga in New York, Oslo, or Paris can find an ashram in his own country where he can spend a few days or a couple of weeks intensively studying Yoga.

From its ancient beginnings in India, Yoga has spread throughout the world. Percentage-wise, there is probably less Yoga practiced in India today than in any other civilized country of the world. The poor masses in India certainly don't practice it, nor is it approved of as a pastime for Indian women. True, Nehru practiced Yoga when he was Prime Minister, but so did Ben-Gurion when he was Prime Minister of Israel.

Although Yoga should certainly be acknowledged as our heritage from ancient India, it should not be linked with present-day India. Yoga is a modern science, the answer to the needs of contemporary life. It does not belong to one nationality; it belongs to all nationalities alike. My hope is that one day it can be made to serve as one link for world unity.

CHAPTER VI

YOGA AND MEDITATION

The practice of Yoga can be limited to its physical aspects with very successful results. Many people do exactly this, are completely satisfied, and ask nothing more. But those who are searching for something else, an inner strength, a philosophy to live by, faith, call it what you will, can discover in Raja Yoga the path to spiritual fulfillment. The wise have always recognized man's need for spiritual refreshment. From earliest times, religious and philosophical sages have advocated that a period be set aside when materialistic interests are forgotten and attention is directed to the soul, so that, through inner reflection, man may try to establish his unity with the divine. Throughout history, thoughtful people have searched for more meaning in life

beyond mere existence—being born, fulfilling daily obligations, and dying. These moments of quiet repose enable man to add significance to his life as he attempts to discover and identify himself with the universal and eternal truths.

Raja Yoga, the Yoga of meditation, is the search for highest truth by controlling the mind. The wise Swami Vivekananda, who brought the teachings of Yoga to the United States in 1893, said, "The powers of the mind are like rays of light dissipated; when they are concentrated they illumine."* In Raja Yoga the powers of the mind are concentrated, turned inward, illuminating the dark corners of existence and leading to self-realization. The Yogi tries to control his mind to the point where nature has no control over him and he, in effect, has mastered nature. To go deeply into the study of Raja Yoga is a lifetime undertaking, probably feasible only for a deeply spiritual person or someone free of the distractions of family or the necessity to earn a living. Those of us involved in a hectic, competitive society cannot abdicate our responsibilities for a life of meditation. However, meditation, even without all the complexities of Raja Yoga, can provide us with spiritual oases providing peace and perspective to our lives.

Our present society is constantly criticized on the grounds that while it is becoming materially rich it is becoming spiritually impoverished. Organized religion, recognizing that it is not fulfilling its spiritual role, is undergoing a period of self-examination. Our youth are sensing this void and creating an upheaval in our society. Although their ideas and methods are sometimes questionable, there is no arguing with their basic concept that materialism must give way to spiritualism in order to create a better world. In their earnest search for significance they turn to meditation or,

* Swami Vivekananda, *Raja-Yoga* (New York Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, 1955).

as it was recently presented, transcendental meditation. The extra word adds no new meaning yet complicates and obscures the principles of meditation. The basic principles of transcendental meditation were profound and its advocator, I'm sure, sincere, but with the adoration of the Guru, meditation became a farce. Those looking for kicks and the generally dissatisfied flocked to meditation, hoping to find instant bliss. People began to "meditate" without first disciplining themselves in the methods of meditation. Successful meditation was measured by length of time. Eight hours of meditation was excellent, four hours adequate, and two hours wasn't even worth mentioning. As meditation became obscured with an occult mumbo jumbo it became utterly incomprehensible. It somehow reminded me of Hans Christian Andersen's story, "The Emperor's New Clothes," in which everyone was afraid to speak up and question for fear of being called ignorant.

The followers of transcendental meditation put all the emphasis on the mental aspects while ignoring the physical state of the body. The body and the mind are a single entity in a constant state of interaction. So although it is possible to achieve mental purification when the body is in poor condition it is certainly extremely difficult. There have existed people who have achieved fulfillment in spite of physical handicaps. For example, Beethoven composed his greatest music despite physical afflictions. But I have seen people in what they called deep meditation huffing as they sat down and puffing as they got up because of overweight, their noses running and eyes watering. Perhaps they did experience some exaltation as they meditated, but I doubt if it had a lasting effect. Meditation should reach the mind via the body, because the body is the more obliging of the two. When the body is in perfect health and attunement, meditation becomes much easier. A person with a well, strong

body voluntarily seeks mental insight. I never suggest meditation to my students in the first stages of Yoga, but invariably those who reach the intermediate or advanced stage of Hatha Yoga become receptive to the spiritual aspects. When they prepare their bodies, and inadvertently their minds, through the stretchings and breathing they make a natural transition into Raja Yoga.

Like all fads, mass meditation soon lost its wide popularity. It did some good in helping a few who were dependent on drugs, but for the most part it left its followers as dissatisfied as when they began. Yet meditation correctly learned can be a means to heighten pure consciousness and provide answers to the bewildered in his quest for meaning in life. True Yoga meditation is neither mysterious nor glamorous. It requires diligence in controlling the mind just as Hatha Yoga does in controlling the body. When stripped of the philosophical and psychological attributes that surround it, it is a simple method, as all great truths are basically simple. I can explain it in one sentence: To meditate in Yoga means *to shut out all thoughts*. Contrary to common interpretation, it is not to comtemplate or to speculate but to stop thinking. This is perhaps the most difficult feat to accomplish. The most intricate asana is easier to execute than to quiet the mind without sleep, because the mind wants to be working constantly, controlling us at all times. The mind can force someone to think when he wants to stop thinking. He is the slave of his mind. There are times when thoughts become too much to bear; then oblivion is sought through alcohol or drugs. Often a person will seek a diversion to get his mind off something, but he discovers he can turn his thoughts elsewhere but he can't turn them off. Psychotherapy has taught that it is most often the quality of thoughts that cause mental illness. The way that we reflect upon ourselves in relation to the rest of the world strongly

influences our happiness and well-being. Part of a person's thoughts are positive, based on purpose and meaning. Another part, very often the greater part, are ineffectual and trivial, dwelling on futile daydreams. Running through the mind are also thoughts of greed, envy, and malice which do not hurt others because they are kept hidden, but they do harm the individual's own body and mind. These thoughts are like poison in the system, causing dissatisfaction and often sickness.

Just as we rest our bodies by ceasing activity, we can rest our minds by turning off all harmful thoughts. Once again we are able to view things in their proper perspective. That is the theory; the rest is practical application that ultimately leads to self-knowledge and bliss. Through meditation, one can practice controlling the mind until one is the master of his mind. With mastery of the mind comes the power to choose the thoughts that are pleasing and useful. As you work toward this goal of mental mastery, you'll discover that your power of concentration has increased. You will be able to focus your attention more intensely without being distracted, making it easier to accomplish the tasks before you. Each person has within himself the capacity for significant purpose and inner tranquility. These potentials can be realized once the powers of the mind are harnessed into beneficial channels. As thought determines action, there is strength to undertake and carry out what was once considered hopeless. Fears and self-doubts will vanish.

Meditation leads man to the infinite, the union with the divine, whether one calls that God or another name. The divine is sought by searching for the essence of ourselves. By finding ourselves we find the Universal Spirit. The God I speak of is within all of us. He does not single out and reveal himself only to a chosen few but can be comprehended to all in life who seek him. It is man who chooses God.

Through self-realization we discover the highest truth, for God is in man and man is in God. This is in all the holy scriptures written by wise men: "God helps those who help themselves," "God unto thyself," "The kingdom of Heaven is within," and "Thou art That." Many have read these truths but not perceived them, because they were looking for intricate philosophies instead of simple truths.

All religious scriptures have tried to teach man to seek inward peace through prayer and meditation, but man has deliberately misinterpreted their meanings to shift the blame for his shortcomings on uncontrollable higher forces. But it is only when man can find the strength within himself without relying on outside forces that a better world can evolve. When he realizes that in himself lies the answer to existence, he can lead a meaningful life. When he stops blaming his failures on providence and learns to honestly evaluate his faults, he can liberate himself from fear and restore his faith in himself.

All the true prophets and saints were Yogis. They were divine not because God chose them but because they sought and discovered God. Everyone can become a Yogi by practicing inner reflection and meditation. Not all are meant to lead the world, but everyone can become strong enough to lead himself through life with purpose and joy, and, when the times comes, to death with acceptance.

Of course, no special house of worship is necessary for meditation. However, communal meditation and chanting is a beautiful and inspirational experience. The melodic similarity of Hindu, Gregorian, Hebrew, and Mohammedan chants leads me to believe that they must have been of one origin. Being a social animal, man derives added peace and joy from sharing his inspirational experience with others. Communal meditation and chanting are done in most ashrams. Perhaps someday, as more people become trained in

meditation, there will be meditation centers, instead of individual houses of worship, where man can go freely to refresh himself from his daily tasks. This idea of a nonsectarian, spiritual house may sound utopian to most, but attainable to those who firmly believe in the principles of Yoga.

How to Practice Meditation

Successful meditation is not measured by time. Even five minutes of daily practice can bring results. The ascetic Yogi, of course, meditates for many hours, but the everyday Yogi finds one-half hour sufficient for his needs. Like Hatha Yoga, meditation practice is a purely mechanical process of everyday practice. It is the steady routine that produces the benefits.

Meditation can be done anywhere but it is most effective when performed in beautiful surroundings. If you're lucky enough to have a garden that affords privacy, by all means meditate there in the mild weather. There is nothing more conducive to meditation than the beauties of nature, as anyone who has ever meditated on a mountaintop or next to a waterfall will tell you. Wherever and whenever you meditate, make sure you choose a quiet place and a time that will not be interrupted. Try to anticipate and deter all possible disturbances. For instance, take the phone off the hook.

Silence adds to the quality of meditation. Living in a society high in what the experts call noise pollution, most people have already learned to block out much of the noises around them from traffic, the neighbor's plumbing or television sets. However, complete stillness is not compulsory to meditation, for eventually inner tranquility will compensate for outside noises. The perfect position for meditation is the Lotus pose, hands resting loosely on the knees, spine erect, and eyes closed. But meditation should not lead to

sleep or a trancelike state. The mind must be completely conscious to be fully utilized. That is why meditation must always be practiced in a sitting position with the spine, neck, and head in a straight line. The Yogi adapted the Lotus seat for meditation because in this position the legs are locked and the body becomes completely still, contrary to the Western style of sitting in a chair, with legs dangling, where we find ourselves constantly squirming and fidgeting. If you have not yet perfected the Lotus, sit in the cross-legged posture or the Half Lotus. Sitting on a small pillow helps. It makes it easier to maintain the Lotus or other cross-legged poses and a straight spine.

We also employ a *mudra* during meditation. Mudras are symbolic positions or static poses held motionless. This is the mudra for meditation: Rest the hands palms up on the knees with the thumb and first finger closed, forming a circle, and the other three fingers pressed together extended to the side.

Meditation is always preceded by Pranayama, which, literally translated, means the control of Prana. Pranayama refers to the various breathing exercises that can aid to quiet the mind for meditation. The body and the mind must be prepared for successful meditation. Harmonious breathing is the most effective way to lay the groundwork.

Although all types of breathing may be used, one of my teachers once told me that the Alternate Nostril Breath is the finest preparation for meditation. Through experience I have come to agree with him and use it exclusively as Pranayama.

In advanced meditation *bandhas*, locks or contractions, are also used in Pranayama with the inhalation. The purpose of the bandhas is to lock all the openings of the body to hold the Prana within. This is how it is done. At the start of Pranayama, the eyes and nostrils are closed. The

glottis is closed by swallowing, the tongue is curled upward against the upper palate to close off the thorax, and the chin is pressed firmly into the jugular notch. At the same time, the heel is pressed into the perineum, to lock the genital openings, and the anal sphincters are contracted. This may sound complicated, but it does come easy with the practice of advanced Hatha Yoga, because contractions are used with many of those asanas.

The steps to meditation are concentration and contemplation. Concentration is fixing the mind on an object or a sound. Contemplation is the next stage, when you can hold the image of that object or sound without allowing your mind to wander. Further, it is the ability to abandon the ordinary mind, or that intangible part of us labeled the ego, and return deep within yourself beyond the realm of all thoughts and emotions. You have achieved meditation when your mind becomes a continuous flow devoid of thought. When concentration becomes so intense that that continuous flow is absorbed, when future, past and present become one and when the essence of knowledge is experienced, that is *Samadhi*.

There are many ways to practice concentration. Perhaps the easiest way to begin is with object concentration. Gaze at a work of art, such as a picture or a statue, or if outdoors, at an art work of nature, a flower, twig, or tree. Any object that is pleasing to the senses will do. Look steadily at the object for about three minutes. Don't let the gaze swerve or outside distractions interfere.

Now close your eyes and transfer your gaze to what the Yogis call the "third eye," the area in the forehead between the eyebrows. Hold the image of the picture as long as you can. Contemplate on its color, shape, and substance. The immediate reaction will be quite vivid, but the image will fade and begin to melt away. Try to hold on to it and bring

it back. At first this will be difficult, but sheer practice will make it easier to achieve.

When the image can no longer be recalled, let go completely and empty your mind of all thoughts and impressions. After a while you will perceive lights, colors, images, and even metaphysical abstractions. Don't be afraid of them or try to hold them back, but sink into these visions and let yourself float with them.

Don't let any outside thoughts penetrate your meditation. Keep a mental door locked tight to keep away these intruders. They will try to slip in any which way, especially in the beginning, but as you progress in meditation you will become stronger than they and more expert in warding them off.

Concentration on the flame of a candle in dimness or darkness is also effective. Close your eyes and hold the flicker of the flame in the third eye. Try to steady the flicker. When it recedes order it back.

I have also found that concentrating and contemplating on your own reflection in the mirror is good training for meditation. Just don't get distracted by wondering if your present hairdo really is becoming. Regard your image impersonally. Learn to hold the gaze until the picture blurs completely. The mental picture will appear in reverse shades of your actual image, much like a photographic negative. But the outline will be quite definite and easy to hold on to and recall.

Another method of practice for meditation is concentrating on sound—music, the song of a bird, or even a fire siren. In class we practice by humming Om, because its vibrations last a long time. Om is the most sacred and profound word in Yoga, said to have been the first sound produced at creation and to be the first sound a baby makes when it learns to speak. It seems likely that the Hebrew Omen, which became

the Christian Amen and the Muslin Amin, derived from Om. Hindus use Om as an invocation and also to end their religious services. The Yogi completes his meditation with Om Shanti (peace) repeated three times. It is also used as a verbal and written greeting and as the closing of a letter.

The variety of the word's interpretations even outnumber its uses. In its Sanskrit origin Om consists of three letters: A, U, and M. They are thought by some to represent the body, soul, and spirit, respectively. Others claim they stand for the states of working, dreaming, and sleeping. Then there are the schools of thought which identify the letters with the three great gods of the one divine being: A for Brahma, the creator; U, Vishnu, the preserver; and M, Shiva, the destroyer.

The word itself, which first appeared in the Upanishads, is also open to a variety of definitions. It can mean the universe, supreme wisdom, the highest achievement, everlasting peace, ultimate fulfillment, or reality. Because there is no single translation, it can be applied to serve different purposes and meanings, such as in prayer and meditation as God. It becomes most effective when used as a Mantra in meditation, repeated over and over silently or chanted with the accent on the M, or hum. Holding the hum as long as possible creates definite vibrations that the practiced Yogi hears or feels sometimes for hours after subsidence.

We chant Om in rounds, for best effects in a low voice drawing out the last sound. When the sound ebbs away, we concentrate on the third eye. We not only listen to the sound with our ears but let ourselves become enveloped within the sound. By sinking into the center of the sound, we become the sound.

Mantra Yoga can be practiced the same way in meditation. A personal Mantra is not necessary, for any holy or

pleasing word or sentence can be used. The repetition of Om is as profound as any spiritual saying.

You may find that concentrating on your heartbeat, pulse, or breath comes easiest for you. Experiment with different methods. Eventually you will find what suits you best. When you start meditation, at first you may feel slightly foolish and self-conscious even though you are completely alone. You have probably always identified meditation with strictly Oriental practices, quite alien to your own Occidental nature. But remember that you probably had the same emotions about the term Yoga and now you no longer regard it as some quaint Eastern rite. But meditation, like Hatha Yoga, must be experienced to be fully understood. As you practice don't be discouraged. Although it is a long road ahead to mastering meditation, you will progress each day along the way. Do not begin with preconceived goals in mind. Meditation is not a planned journey; it is an exploration into the unknown toward the discovery of the true self.

CHAPTER VII

YOGA AND MENTAL HEALTH

In Yoga there is no boundary line between mental health and physical health. They are one and the same. The body and the mind are intertwined, the condition of one influencing the other either beneficially or adversely. We are constantly being reminded of the relationship between the mind and the body when our emotions manifest themselves physically. Anger and excitement raise the blood pressure. Fear tenses the muscles and dries the mouth. And every torch singer will tell you how unrequited love makes the heart ache. Conversely, a person with a throbbing toothache will find it difficult to concentrate efficiently on making out his income tax return. For the brain is only another organ of the body. Its malfunctioning will have an impact

on an otherwise healthy body, just as a diseased heart, liver, or kidney will. And vice versa, a physical disorder will take its toll mentally.

Medicine has come to recognize the role the mind plays in affecting physical health. It is generally accepted that the mind can influence the body to the extent of causing psychosomatic illnesses—not imaginary complaints but actual physical symptoms resulting from emotional upheaval. However, generally accepted rarely means individually accepted. Telling someone that his malady is psychosomatic usually meets with outraged indignation. Each person takes his own aches and pains very seriously and is positive they arise from purely physical causes that could be cured if only the doctor were smart enough.

During the ten years following my back injury, I suffered the symptoms of every illness known to man, including coronary, ulcers, cancer, gynecological ailments, gallbladder attacks, and appendicitis. If there were any afflictions I missed it was out of ignorance of their existence. Practically a whole generation of medical personnel gained valuable experience performing and analyzing tests on me. There were even surgeons who, out of a desire to either oblige me or practice their surgical skills, would gladly have removed various organs which I had diagnosed as the core of my troubles. Fortunately for me, if not for the furtherance of medical science, my husband refused to have me operated upon. The pains were real, but their roots were in the mind.

Medicine learned to look to the mind to help solve the problems of the body, but psychiatry in general, except for drug therapy, tends to overlook the body to help solve the problems of the mind. As it stands now psychiatry is making little headway in coping with the enormous problem of increasing mental illness. The effectiveness of psychoanaly-

sis, the long-standing classical method of helping those with emotional problems, is necessarily limited by its very nature because it is unable to reach significant numbers of people. There just aren't enough trained psychiatrists and psychologists to go around. Those who do exist can see only a few patients at a time. Besides being able to benefit few individuals, effective psychoanalysis is most applicable to the healthy neurotic, the person who can still function in spite of his problems and, in most cases, do well enough in his work to meet the analyst's fees, usually quite steep.

There are, of course, many other techniques of psychological therapy in addition to psychoanalysis, all helpful within their limits. But most approaches still insist on divorcing the mind from the body. The major breakthrough in the struggle for mental health will come when psychiatry and medicine merge to treat the whole human, mind and body. Right now, to a certain extent, science is investigating the theory that many psychoses have a physiological cause. Unfortunately this is leading psychiatry to an ever growing use of drugs for a wide range of emotional disturbances. A large part of psychiatric research is directed toward developing newer, more effective drugs. Certainly drugs have a definite role in controlling severe mental illness the way antibiotics can control disease of a physical nature. But as in the treatment of the body, drugs can provide only temporary relief from the symptoms while harming other areas of the body.

The aims of psychology and Yoga are similar. Both in their way are working for the liberation of the individual, to release him from forces that inhibit and limit him, so that ultimately man can realize his full potential. As more people become educated about Yoga, its influence will inevitably be felt in psychiatry. At the present time the majority are ignorant of or disinterested in Yoga. However, those in the

field of psychiatry and psychology who do learn about Yoga often find its techniques and principles helpful. Some of these doctors even advise certain of their patients to take Yoga lessons because the breathing methods and exercises may make them more receptive to therapy.

There are also those practitioners outside the mainstream of orthodox psychiatry who follow the principles of Dr. Edmund Jacobson's progressive relaxation or Dr. Wilhelm Reich's orgonomic psychiatry. Both methods involve different theories on mental illness, but basically they adhere to the ancient Yogic wisdom that the mind can be stilled through muscular relaxation. Mental tension corresponds to muscular tension, for all tension originates from a concentrated muscle. Thought, movement, and feeling occur simultaneously. Within the human, thoughts and emotions always produce a muscular reaction. In orgonomy, progressive relaxation, and other similar therapeutic methods, as in Yoga, muscular spasms are either induced by the trained therapist or taught to be self-induced. Once the subject consciously experiences tension, he can then release it. Tension has become our modern bugaboo. In a less sophisticated time someone would say he had a case of nerves, but now the household word is tension. Did you fail the driving test? Yell at your wife? Come home with a blinding headache? Chances are you'll blame it on tension. For tension has become a dictator, holding its victims in an iron grip. And the more tension is feared, the more it is allowed to get the upper hand. The weapons most generally used to combat it are temporary relaxers such as tranquilizers, alcohol, or drugs. Not only are their effects short lived but their constant use is harmful.

Yoga teaches you not only how to face tension but how to set it to work for you. Through the contractions and holds, the body is tensed, then consciously relaxed, un-

blocking tensions. You can also learn how to "spot relieve" nervousness and anxiety by practicing the breathing techniques. The fiercest tension can be overcome by quiet and controlled breathing. As tension is chased away, relaxation takes over. These results are achieved by sheer mechanical practice. Contrary to strict Freudian psychiatry Yoga tries to locate the anxiety in the body instead of the mind, because it is a much less complex mechanism to work with. Instead of forcing the mind to solve all the riddles of life, we turn to the body because it is much more accommodating and flexible.

Yoga exercises and breathing can take the place of any tranquilizer more effectively, permanently, and harmlessly. I saw this borne out when I volunteered to teach Yoga to patients at one of our leading mental hospitals. My students are not severely psychotic but voluntarily committed patients, all functioning intelligently and almost exclusively heartbreakingly young. Most of them had made the scene searching for the answer in every possible aberration, but finding no answer they snapped. They are still searching and are very enthusiastic about Yoga. The first time they see me, the immediate reaction is one of unanimous disappointment at finding a middle-aged lady in leotards instead of a bearded, dhoti-clad Guru teaching the class. But they stay out of curiosity, then because they enjoy the classes. They come to me all tied in knots. When I touch them, they are painfully tight and taut, but they are able to respond beautifully to instruction. As most of these students can't concentrate very well, I start them off with the simplest basic breathing exercises, which I advise them to practice routinely. In time they loosen up visibly and their extreme tenseness decreases. But unfortunately very little can be achieved, because while the doctors there tolerate Yoga they do not give it support. They regard it in the same cate-

gory as basket weaving –something to keep the patients busy. Some doctors even consider Yoga a form of mysticism and prohibit their patients from attending the classes. Not even caring to investigate the possibilities of Yoga, they offer little besides analysis and drugs. Ironically, these patients are weaned from illegal drugs only to become conditioned to legal drugs.

One well-known psychoanalyst who has long been interested in studying relaxation and breathing exercises, such as certain Yoga techniques, as helpful adjuncts to psychotherapy is Dr. Stefan de Schill. Dr. de Schill is Director of Research at the American Mental Health Foundation in New York City, where research on this topic has been under way for many years. When people are more relaxed, they also become more amenable to psychotherapy and more progress can be made, he says. Therefore, relaxation exercises can have a beneficial effect for certain people. For others, pills or tranquilizers are needed to achieve similar results.

Working with Dr. de Schill on this project is Ralph A. Suris, an experienced physical therapist quite enthusiastic about the dramatic results he's been achieving with relaxation and breathing. "Letting go is the key," he says. "When a person can learn to let go physically, he's able to let go mentally."

In his treatment of patients with psychophysical problems, Mr. Suris combines Yoga with other techniques such as Jacobson's method of relaxation. "Most of these patients lack the discipline and self-motivation to use Yoga exclusively," he explained. "Younger patients and those who are more highly motivated respond to Yoga best." Personally involved with Yoga himself, he considers motivation the vital element in its successful achievement. "You can't really get Yoga from anyone. You must live it."

If you went to Mr. Suris to supplement your psychotherapy this is the kind of treatment you would probably receive: First, you would be told to stretch out and assume the position of complete relaxation. Mr. Suris starts with this because anyone motivated can learn to assume this pose. You remain in the position for five minutes. Then, he would begin Jacobson's relaxation techniques to establish the absence of muscle tension. He would raise your arm and let it drop. If he meets no resistance and your arm flops down as soon as he lets go, fine and good. Your arm is completely relaxed. But if your arm remains suspended, he'll point out to you that it's muscle tension "because air isn't keeping that arm up." He might ask you to bend your arm at the elbow to get you to feel the tension in your biceps.

From there, he would go on to the breathing exercises which have a calming effect on the mind. The deep Yoga breathing relaxes the mental condition because of its influence on the nervous system, especially its relation to the vagus nerve. If you had never breathed a Yoga breath, the direct opposite of a Western-style breath, he would instruct you how to inhale in three parts—beginning with the abdomen, intercostal area, and neck. After filling up with air to your capacity, you hold the breath to the count of ten, only about two or three seconds. Then exhale fully with a little forceful push at the end. As you become proficient in the breathing exercises you would do it in one continuous movement without counting. The breathing exercises are done in a straight back chair. Mr. Suris advises his patients to practice them during the working day in a straight chair at the office. Or if their office is large and private, he urges them to lie down on the floor for the Complete Relaxation.

Depending on your flexibility and motivation, Mr. Suris would teach you other exercises. If he considered you a highly nervous individual, he probably wouldn't try to

teach you the Lotus Position. It's been his experience that his highly nervous patients can't relax in the Lotus Seat, because they are too stiff with tension. But if you're accomplished and have flexible hip sockets, he might have you try the Lotus. What he is striving for, in the performance of exercise, is a continuous flow of movement. "As I get the patient to relax, he becomes physically and mentally flexible. There's a lot of truth to the saying, 'Action absorbs anxiety.' " The exercises are arranged so you will rhythmically flow from one position to the next.

Although Mr. Suris is convinced that Yoga can be used as an adjunct in psychological therapy, he readily admits that his methods are not generally supported by the psychiatric profession. He believes that there are too many in the profession who are becoming too reliant on "push button cures," prescribing pills and giving tests. Yet he has found that there are some doctors open-minded enough to acknowledge the beneficial effects of physical therapy on emotional problems. More often it is the patients themselves who realize how physical techniques have helped them.

One such case was a thirty-year-old patient of Mr. Suris who was on the verge of becoming a psychotic. He had been institutionalized a few times. Originally he had come to Mr. Suris because of a back problem. Mr. Suris used Yoga exercises with the other therapeutic exercises to treat this man's back, as he does in sixty to seventy percent of the back pains he handles. (He has found Yoga exercises useful to relax the back and produce spinal flexibility, particularly the Twist for rotation of the vertebrae in muscle spasms due to misalignment.) This particular patient has progressed so much that he has been able to cut down on tranquilizers and his visits to his psychiatrist. Mr. Suris believes that Yoga, with the other relaxation techniques,

was instrumental in the marked improvement of this patient's condition.

A large part of Mr. Suris' practice consists of treating back disorders. He knows that often organic back pains cause emotional problems, if for instance, that person could no longer function in his job. He even had a case of a young married man who was unable to fulfill his sex role because of back pains. One can readily understand the stresses that such a disability would give rise to. Possibly husband and wife could learn to adjust to the problem via psychology, but by attacking the problem physically, that is curing the back disorder, the emotional problem is also solved.

Mr. Suris has also put Yoga to work relieving the fatigue of harried businessmen. "When a busy executive is doing the exercises, he's concentrating on breathing and rhythmic motion, not thinking about the half-million dollar deal at the office. His mind is calm, for while he's physically holding and letting go, he's also holding and letting go mentally. They come to me after a day at the office, a bundle of nerves with tense, aching muscles. But after a short workout, they say they're so relaxed and refreshed, they could begin another day's work then and there." These people feel not only physically and mentally refreshed but spiritually refreshed, Mr. Suris pointed out. "When you relax the mind and the body, you also give the spirit a lift."

Very much concerned with the spirit, Dr. Joseph H. Gelberman is a practicing psychologist and rabbi who incorporates Yoga into therapy. He is also Director of the Mid-Way Counseling Center in New York which, as he describes it, is pioneering a therapeutic approach to mental health, using the principles of religion and psychiatry. Asked why he uses Yoga in the treatment of his patients, he answered simply that it was part of him. "Whatever I am, my profanity or saintliness, hopelessness or hope, wisdom or fool-

ishness, is all brought into my practice. Therapy is not merely a technique. The therapist is not a machine, but a human working with other humans."

Dr. Gelberman began studying Hatha Yoga about seven years ago, because there happened to be a Yoga center next to his synagogue, The Little Synagogue. One day as Dr. Gelberman was coming out of his synagogue, the Swami and his students were also coming out of the Yoga center. Dr. Gelberman invited them all into the synagogue for a cup of coffee, and they accepted. During that kaffeeklatsch the Rabbi was so impressed with the Swami as a real, unaffected person that the next day he went to him and asked to start lessons. At that time, in spite of three operations, Dr. Gelberman still suffered from varicose veins. He didn't get off to a very auspicious start because soon after he began practicing Yoga, he fell and hurt himself. Then that summer he experienced a miserable week at a Yoga camp. "It was cold, it rained every day and the food was unbelievably bad," he recalls. "Now the food wouldn't bother me because when I go to Yoga camp, I fast for three or four days. The body trained in Yoga can get along without food for long periods because of Prana."

Yoga helped Dr. Gelberman's varicose veins and certainly affected his emotional health when he was once more able to painlessly walk, do his work, and move around. "There is certainly a relationship between physical and mental well-being," he said. "Before starting psychological therapy, it is necessary to eliminate the possibility that the symptoms have physical causes. For example, the cause of a headache may be psychological, but it may also be a brain tumor."

Dr. Gelberman uses Hatha Yoga on a patient when he thinks it is necessary and when he feels the patient will respond to it. Sometimes when he sees that a patient is nerv-

ous, he will show him Yoga breathing techniques to relax him. Or Dr. Gelberman may recommend that the patient go for Yoga exercises. "However, Yoga is not for the lazy. You must work hard at it and have discipline. It's a daily thing, not something you can try for five months but something you spend a lifetime on.

"Yoga works because it establishes physical health which is the basis for emotional health. The exercises can build up your self-confidence, and naturally you'll feel better. Just as you need a place to live to shelter you from the elements, the soul lives within the body. When the roof leaks, you'll spend a miserable night.

"However, while physical health is a prerequisite for mental health, that is not to say that you need tip-top physical health to have mental health. I personally feel physical well-being is not enough. The man who's in great physical condition isn't going to find it a help when his wife throws him out because he can't handle the situation emotionally.

"There are people with physical ailments who can rise above their pains by mental and spiritual strength. To the outsider a person may seem a physical wreck, but his physical problems don't bother him. For example, when Rabbi Akiba was being burned at the stake by the Romans, his disciples asked him why he was smiling. 'Don't you feel pain?' they asked. He answered, 'There may be pain but I don't feel it because I am so happy that now I can completely serve God in body, mind and spirit.' " As a more contemporary example, Dr. Gelberman pointed to the late President Kennedy who was in continuous physical pain but was able to rise above it and conquer it.

"If a person has pneumonia, then has a serious fall, then gets beaten up, then is in an automobile accident all in one month, he could go insane. But if he has a good attitude, he won't." Dr. Gelberman believes that the mental aspects of

Yoga can help people achieve the kind of attitude that enables them to rise above the hardships and tragedies of life. Yoga can enable a person to view his problems objectively and so be better able to cope with them. He feels that Yoga concentration can prevent mental troubles so that a person will never have to resort to psychological therapy. One gains detachment from his self and all his little problems through Yoga.

This Yogic detachment does not signify withdrawal from society or from personal pleasure, he explained. Rather it is the ability to rise above petty egocentrism that obstructs effective and creative functioning. "There is a difference between needs and wants. Man has certain needs— food, shelter, sex, etc. He also has certain wants—he wants to live in a penthouse on Park Avenue. Problems arise when the wants are turned into needs. I love this apartment," he said, waving a hand at the warmly furnished room we were sitting in, "live in it, work in it, but if I were deprived of it, I could still go on. I would do my work in a basement. That is the kind of detachment that makes a whole person."

I, myself, was made "whole" by Yoga, after undergoing analysis. Terrible as physical disability is, the anguish of mental illness is worse. There is no norm as to the origins of mental illness, for there are numerous circumstances that can cause it. In my case it was evidently the effects of my childhood environment, aggravated by successive shocks to my nervous system all through my life, with the accident and loss of my baby as the *coup de grace*. My symptoms were mostly physical, showing up in dizziness, nausea, blackouts, extreme fatigue, and tremors. After a battery of physical tests proved negative, the cause of my illness was diagnosed as mental and treatment was advised. As I mentioned, I never wholeheartedly accepted the verdict that my ailments originated in the mind but continued

insisting that their causes were physical. However, I finally did consent to psychotherapy. At that time the crowd of psychiatrists I encountered varied in their methods of treatment by being either couch or chair men. Doctors One, Two, Three, Four, Five, and Six had me assume either an upright or vertical position, took down my statistics, listened to my symptoms, and dismissed me after two or three sessions because the insurance company wouldn't pay their requested fees. Doctor Number Seven saw me for six weeks for a total period of ten minutes each time, prescribing a new tranquilizer for me. When I shyly asked when he would start analysis, he suggested that I really must be crazy if I thought that he would "put you on the couch for the lousy money the insurance company pays me."

On to Doctor Number Eight who had apparently reached a satisfactory financial arrangement with the insurance company. He was a chair man, who practiced the silent method used quite often in therapy then but fortunately not so much now—he did not talk unless I talked. But I did not talk, because I wasn't allowed to smoke and at that time could not utter a complete sentence without a cigarette in my hand, and because having to sit in a straight chair for fifty minutes caused me considerable back pain. Having recently stopped smoking, he didn't let his patients smoke lest he get tempted. Instead he chewed gum. So we sat facing each other for a whole year in utter silence—he chewing placidly, thinking, for all I knew, whether he'd have steak or lamb chops for dinner, and I, seeing him as the reembodiment of Hitler, hating him with every fiber of my body. That year I didn't get better, but neither did I get worse. I think my hate kept me going.

Thoroughly fed up with the insurance company, my husband and I found Doctor Number Nine through the clinic of

a mental hospital. He let me smoke, was kind, talked to me, and made sense. The day came when I stopped seeing him as my father, lover, friend, and psychiatrist and accepted him for what he was, a physician. Just as I had learned, as a young woman, to overcome my modesty and appear nude in front of a doctor, I learned to undress my thoughts and expose them. As I removed layer after layer, I, like Alice in Wonderland, found that nothing seemed as it appeared: black was white, light was dark, the unreal was the real and the apparent the reverse. I learned that nothing is so terrible and frightening when you can squarely face it and learn to evaluate it. I improved, and after two years, we parted by mutual agreement.

I was fine if all went well, but when faced with a crisis or difficult decision, my old symptoms would reappear. The dizziness, nausea, blackouts would hit me again, although not so pronounced as before. I learned to cope with them just as a diabetic or cardiac case learns to handle his attacks. In other words, my illness was arrested but not cured. This doesn't mean my psychoanalysis was a failure. In the fictionalized versions of Freudian theory, the heroine in analysis suddenly discovers in an awesome moment of self-revelation that as an adolescent she desired incestuous relations with her father. Once these repressed emotions are brought out into the open, she is perfect and lives happily ever after. In real life it doesn't work quite that way. It happens very seldom that a deep-seated neurosis or psychosis is discovered to stem from a single trauma. Also, finding the cause for the mental suffering does not necessarily effect the cure. Most often, when the anxiety is dispelled, a void is created. Psychoanalysis, in its way, has amputated an integral part of the individual, for he had become used to living with his neurosis. A positive substitute is necessary to complete the cure. Yoga provided me with the means to be-

come a whole person again. It can help many others who have completed psychoanalysis and are looking for direction in their lives.

However, Yoga is not limited to mental rehabilitation. Its greatest service to the cause of mental health can be, as Dr. Gelberman pointed out, in the form of preventive medicine. People break down as a result of stress. The tragedy that causes one person to jump off the roof merely causes another to make adjustments in his life. Yoga can give a person the strength to make adaptations to life rather than being overcome by its trials and tribulations.

I venture to say that anyone who takes up Yoga in early years will never experience mental illness. Because, first of all, he will be able to keep himself in good physical health. When your physical health is good, you can withstand emotional strain better. How many times have you heard people buffeted about by misfortune remark philosophically, "At least, I've got my health." Good health is a wonderful consolation in times of trouble. It becomes increasingly important in old age. Much of the depression the aged suffer is due to their inability to function physically. The less they're able to do, the less they try to do, and as a result, their depression becomes more intense. Yoga can help ensure an active old age and is also an exercise an older person can perform, bolstering his confidence.

Many people go through life wound up tightly, their nerves set to snap at the slightest provocation. Each small strain causes them to lose control; a major strain causes them to break down completely. With Yoga exercises you learn to relax, periodically relieving yourself of the mental tension that inevitably builds up to its overflowing point unless it is released. Once you have learned the relaxation techniques of Yoga, you can apply them anytime

they're needed, whenever you're beset by a crisis or anxiety threatens to overcome you.

The physical effects of Yoga on mental well-being may seem obvious, but the emotional effects are more subtle. Yoga promotes a sense of detachment from the self that is uniquely Eastern. While Western thinking stresses the individuality of man, the Eastern mentality is geared to man as being one atom in the infinite life and death cycle. The Easterner does not regard himself with the same importance as the Westerner. While the Western aggrandizement of the individual has many advantages, it also places a large burden of responsibility and guilt on him, which he may often find too heavy to bear. Yoga can lift the individual out of this state of constant subjectivity and self-centeredness to a place of detachment where he can view himself and his role in the world with objectivity. He learns to look into himself. He can discover his true self, not the puffed up image that he often puts forth to others. In searching for the essence of himself, he comes to accept himself for what he is and to have confidence in himself.

Turning within to develop your potential, you can build the emotional strength and independence that enable you to pursue your goals unhampered by petty jealousies, fears, and doubts. To think of something more than your small self can give your life meaning and purpose. Bertrand Russell says, "The man who centers his thoughts and hopes upon something transcending self can find a certain peace amidst the ordinary trouble of life which is impossible to the pure egoist." That is what Yoga teaches and that is the basis of mental health.

CHAPTER VIII

YOGA AND HEALTH

Medical science is advancing at a rapid rate. There is a vaccination for almost every communicable disease. A submicroscopic virus can be pinpointed and an antibiotic developed to kill it. An organ can be taken from one person and transplanted to save another person's life. Yet with all these dramatic breakthroughs in medicine, the state of health in this country is a sorry one. Our hospitals are filled with sufferers of chronic degenerative diseases such as heart ailments, arthritis, diabetes, hypertension, and asthma. And it's the rare person who when asked, "How are you and your family?" can truthfully answer, "Fine, thanks." Most people are plagued with a slew of minor league ailments—colds and other respiratory disorders, al-

lergies, obesity, nervous tension, and digestive complaints. True, people are living longer, but for too many it is an unhealthy old age. Sickness to a degree has come to be taken for granted, while health has become the exception.

Medical science is trying to solve the nation's health problems by developing and prescribing more and more drugs. The right medicine at the right time given to the right person can make the difference between relief and suffering, between life and death. But at the same time there now exists an indiscriminate dispersion of powerful drugs that can cause dangerous reactions. Penicillin, for example, was doled out freely until doctors became aware of the frightening allergic reactions it caused in some people. Now penicillin is prescribed much more cautiously. Thalidomide was prescribed for pregnant women, until its horrible effects became known. Millions of women take birth control pills, although they produce harmful side effects. The pattern seems to be repeating itself with antibiotics. Cases of ill effects from antibiotics are being investigated, and some of these drugs are being ordered off the market. A growing number of scientists are becoming aware that the prevalent overuse of antibiotics and other drugs may be harming not only the individuals who take them but future generations as well, by possibly affecting the genes.

Common sense dictates that there are times when medicine is necessary. But medicine doesn't cure. All medicine can do is establish certain conditions within the body, enabling the body to cure itself. Every drug is a chemical, and overuse must, of necessity, affect the chemical balance of the body. While a medication may be coping wth a situation in one part of the body, it could adversely affect the organism as a whole. Yoga maintains that the solution to the problem of health does not lie in chemicals but in man himself. Man must increase his natural vitality so that his body

is conditioned to resist disease. Yet instead of enhancing and relying on the natural powers of his body, man contributes to their deterioration. Blame for his ill health is placed on the atom bomb (an excuse for mental tension), carbon dioxide fumes escaping from car exhausts, or insecticides sprayed on produce. All of these, of course, do contribute, but they're not totally responsible for everyday ills, aches and pains, and "blah" feelings. Man, for the most part, creates his own unwellness by disregarding nature and abusing his body. The average American shows more concern for his automobile than for his body.

Take a day in the life of a typical New Yorker—I know quite a few like this and I'm sure you do too. He has a cup of coffee and a cigarette for breakfast, rushes to the office, either gulps down a sandwich for lunch or has an executive lunch consisting mostly of cocktails. In the course of the day he drinks about five more cups of coffee usually accompanied by doughnuts and Danish. He rushes home, eats an enormous dinner, after which he either sits or lies down to watch TV, and then goes to bed. He commonly suffers from constipation, indigestion, heartburn, headaches, insomnia, ulcers, frayed nerves, or a combination of any or all of these. His medicine cabinet is well stocked with a variety of prescription medicine plus a generous supply of all the three-way fast-acting headache remedies, antihistamines, bromides, alkalizers, tranquilizers, and stimulants. He goes through life swallowing these pills, increasing the dosage as he grows older, to alleviate his sicknesses. In reality he is only aggravating his deteriorating physical condition. He may live a long time like this but always feeling miserable. This is not even taking into account the harm caused by becoming psychologically dependent on drugs. Sociologists and psychologists are pointing out that the inclination of our youth toward drugs is a natural out-

growth of being raised in homes that are increasingly drug dependent.

The Yogic attitude toward health and medicine is decidedly different. The Yogi considers his healthy body his birthright, for, he contends, everyone is born with the potential to enjoy perfect health all his life. He does not, however, take health for granted but cherishes it as a precious gift and devotes part of his life to maintaining it. He does not coddle his body, but neither does he abuse it. As for disease, the Yogi does not follow the extremes of either ignoring its existence or fearing it. He is rarely affected by disease because he has built up the natural resistance of his body. This is done by a healthful diet, exercise, and the mental serenity of Yoga.

Old age is a disease the Yogi tries to ward off. Kept at its maximum peak of good health, the body slows down the process of aging. Not only is the life span extended but the body and mind retain their youthful qualities for much longer. The death of a Yogi is always referred to in terms of giving up his mortal body because it has accomplished its present purpose. His soul, of course, is immortal and his body its sacred temple. Because the Yogi has devoted thoughtful care to his body, at the time of death it is said to be still the body of a much younger man.

Everybody, of course, is subject to the effects of time, but not at the same rate. At present, medical science knows very little about the process of aging. Our present acceptance of one hundred years as a very old age for a human being may be completely fallacious. There are people in remote regions of Russia and Pakistan who live way past the hundred year mark because of their way of life, the purity of the air, and healthy nourishment. At age eighty or ninety they look well and are very healthy.

Most true Yogis have the same knowledge of the human

anatomy and psyche as the trained physician. Their understanding is not derived from medical school but from rigid training and self-discipline combined with common sense. Experience has made them completely aware of every part of their inner body—muscles, blood vessels, glands, and organs. They have learned through rigorous practice to isolate and regulate all these elements in their bodies, including those functions, such as the beating of the heart, which are commonly thought beyond the realm of voluntary control.

This last claim is usually met with much skepticism, but recently science has come up with findings to support it. Laboratory experiments of Dr. Neal E. Miller, head of Rockefeller University's Laboratory of Physiological Psychology, have shown that animals can learn to control heart rate, blood pressure, glandular secretions, and brain waves. Assuming that humans are at least as smart as animals, he is now trying to teach patients with abnormally high heart rates to lower them—by means of electronic signals, not Yoga.

There are Yogis in India and other parts of the world who are known for their powers to heal. Many people turn to them as others turn to physicians. They are scientific men using methods based on the theory that all degenerative conditions are interrelated, that imbalances of the body stem from a common cause. By manipulating the part of the body that is the corresponding counterpart of the afflicted part, they work through the body reflexes via the central nervous system. For example, by kneading a nerve in the foot corresponding to one in the lower part of the body, they are able to relieve symptoms in the affected area.

Some Yogis are also credited with psychic healing powers. It is claimed that they can effect healing through intense concentration on the diseased part of the body, because they possess spiritual healing powers that can be trans-

ferred to the patient. Their powers are in the same category as those of faith healers and voodoo witch doctors. There are people who have been cured of afflictions because of their strong faith in prayer or a religious healer. In the opposite way, when a voodoo witch doctor puts his curse on a victim, the victim has been known to die because he believed in the power of that curse. Of course, *no one* is endowed with the mental power to cure disease of physical origin. People who are healed through concentration or other rites undoubtedly suffer from psychosomatic afflictions. Sickness that is manifested through the power of suggestion can be dispelled through the power of suggestion.

You can exercise this kind of healing power yourself. The power of Prana, that special vitality, can be used to maintain good health by directing its force to areas of the body that are suffering from tension or pain. You do it this way. Place your fingertips on your solar plexus. Close your eyes, inhale deeply, and visualize an intense white stream of light being drawn into your fingertips. Next place your fingertips lightly on the afflicted area. Exhale and visualize the light flowing into that part of your body from your fingers. This should be repeated about ten times. As you become more adept at Yoga, you can try this on yourself or on others who are receptive to this method to restore tranquility or relieve discomfort. This procedure and Yoga, in general, should never be substituted for necessary medical care. It is unlikely that the Yogi who lives in the Himalayas ever needs medical help. If he does get sick, he is self-sufficient. However, the Yogi or Yoga student living in the midst of "civilization" will use his common sense and seek a doctor when one is needed. Or possibly if his condition warrants it, he might go to an osteopath or chiropractor. In this country the medical profession represented by the American Medical Association presents a united front

against the so-called new professions of chiropractic and naturopathy. In other countries, such as Germany, medical men and practitioners of these other health professions work together, as they should, because both can benefit from their mutual knowledge for the good of mankind. Chiropractic is related to Yoga in that both stress manipulation of the spine to assure perfect health. It can alleviate and effect cures in cases of misalignment of the vertebrae, such as whiplash injuries where orthodox medicine has very little to offer.

Classic Yoga hygiene also includes internal cleansing techniques which are considered essential for achieving and maintaining perfect health. Inner cleansings are thought to be as important as outer cleansings. A devout Yogi places his daily enema on a par with brushing his teeth. There are routines to clean the colon, stomach, and respiratory organs. As you can imagine, they are complicated and require a great deal of practice and the utmost concentration. They should never be attempted unless under the supervision of an experienced instructor. I have tried some out of curiosity, but I do not practice them or advocate their practice. Not that I question their effectiveness. On the contrary, I well believe that their proper practice can assure perfect health. However, I feel that an extreme preoccupation with health, or anything else for that matter, can lead to an unhealthy fanaticism that warps the personality.

An occasional enema is beneficial and preferable to any laxative or cathartic which is harsh to the system. The only other internal cleansing technique I might recommend is to relieve a nasal cold by sniffing lukewarm water from the palm of the hand up one nostril and passing it out the other one. In general, the novice concerned with respiratory ailments will find that nasal breathing techniques, performed regularly, help clear up sinus conditions and nasal irritations, relieve headaches, and prevent colds.

I used to catch cold often, but since I have been practicing Yoga I never have one. My good health has helped my family stay healthier, too. You know how a cold or other contagious respiratory disorder goes from one member of a family to the next so that someone is always sick and constantly reinfecting the others. Having even one person resistant to colds can break the cycle of contagion and help keep everyone in the family healthier.

You will discover as you progress in Yoga that you are feeling better than you have felt in years. Naturally, almost any exercise will benefit your physical condition and give you more vitality. Unlike your automobile, the human body does not wear out with use but is more likely to deteriorate from lack of use. Not only are Yoga exercises unparalleled in their thoroughness to condition every area of the body, but they are unique because they exercise the internal organs as well. No other form of exercise provides the internal conditioning Yoga does.

Very few people are aware of the working of their inner organs and their general anatomy. Through Yoga training you can become aware of your inner body and learn how to beneficially affect specific organs. The Yogi can feel each and every organ, gland, and muscle and keep it in excellent working condition.

Many people are never at peace with their digestive system. While not exactly ill, they are continually plagued by chronic discomforts like constipation, flatulence, and heartburn, which they sheepishly attribute to "something I ate." They falsely seek relief in palliatives or symptom-masking drugs that only aggravate these disorders. Diet plays the major role, but exercise to stimulate and relax the digestive system is also necessary. Yoga exercises, especially the abdominal exercises, promote normalization and stimulate healthy functioning of the liver, spleen, kidneys, and all the organs of the digestive system without medications or lax-

atives. The Abdominal Lift, Cobra, Bow, and Locust work on all the organs in the viscera, stimulating the correct functioning of peristalsis. Some of these techniques don't have to be performed more than once a week for lasting benefits. I have students report to me on alleviation of indigestion, constipation, heartburn, chronic gastritis, and colitis. I say that proper diet and mental relaxation through Yoga were the dominant factors in curing Herbert, one of my students who suffered with ulcers. But he swears that the abdominal exercises were solely responsible. I'll modify his claim and say they definitely helped.

Abdominal exercises can affect other areas besides the digestive system. George, who is a young seventy-five, was in perfect physical condition, thanks to Yoga, except for a prostate condition. He discovered that, through daily practice of the Abdominal Lift, the prostate gland returned to normal and a scheduled operation became unnecessary.

The inverted positions such as the Shoulderstand and the Headstand which are emphasized in Yoga also have multiple effects benefiting many parts of the body. With them you can help rest and strengthen your heart. The blood can flow freely into the organs and glands situated in the upper body, where the heart has to pump against gravity. The increased circulation to the thyroid gland stimulates its proper functioning in regulating the body's metabolism. This is an important factor in weight control and general vitality. The increased blood supply to the brain also helps dispel fatigue and promote mental alertness. Many of my senior citizen students tell me that the inverted postures of Yoga have improved their mental clarity. In the Shoulderstand, pressure is also removed from the blood vessels in the legs, minimizing the painful symptoms of varicose veins.

Many gynecologists are now coming to recognize the powers of correct exercise in improving the condition of the

organs and helping to clear up gynecologic disturbances. Many of the exercises these doctors recommend are identical or similar to Yoga techniques. Postpartum instructions include abdominal breathing to strengthen the abdominal muscles and inverted postures to recondition the pelvic organs after childbirth. Menstrual cramps can also be relieved with these positions. I know of one case in which practicing the Shoulderstand corrected an enlargement of the uterus and another one in which it remedied an enlarged ovary.

Relaxation methods derived from Yoga are used in natural childbirth to relieve pain and help achieve an easier delivery. Yoga can also be used to help restore emotional equilibrium during the "blue days" women are prone to periodically—before a menstrual period, in postpartum depression, and during menopause. The relaxation and deep breathing can be very effectively used to alleviate the tensions accompanying menopause and menstruation, and the other exercises will help relieve the cramps and backaches many women suffer during their periods.

The Cobra, Locust, and Bow especially are known to be sexually rejuvenating for both men and women. They also affect the kidneys and complete urinary system. One of my students suffered from chronic cystitis, a painful inflammation of the bladder which formerly could be relieved only through dilation and powerful antibiotics. She has practiced Yoga for three years, and her condition has not flared up in two years. She attributes her improvement to all the exercises, with special emphasis on the Cobra, Locust, and Bow. I also advised her to drink fresh vegetable juices, and she considers the combination infallible.

Many who hear about my success in strengthening my back and who suffer from back conditions, arthritis, rheumatism, or other physical handicaps ask me whether they

should attempt to do Yoga. I don't encourage them because I am not medically trained. Neither do I discourage them except in cases where I know or suspect that exercise may be harmful -in extreme hypertension, certain heart conditions, or where there is the possibility of sprain, fracture, or dislocation in any part of the body.

I strongly advise them to consult a doctor before they start. Once they begin Yoga, I work with them individually as much as I can, and in the course of my teaching I have achieved some marvelous results with these kinds fo problems.

Arthritis alone cripples millions of people in this country, and despite all the research being carried out, no preventive or cure has been found for it. The drugs that are offered to arthritis sufferers may partially relieve the symptoms but cannot cure the disease. In some cases these drugs produce dangerous side effects. Some doctors, especially osteopaths and chiropractors, advocate exercise. I have seen Yoga exercise help sufferers from arthritis and other rheumatoid diseases. Moreover, I am convinced that everyone has a tendency to arthritis, which can be prevented with correct exercise.

Once a person has begun to suffer the effects of arthritis it takes a great deal of courage to exercise. Drugs are a much easier way out. However, the longer an arthritic person waits to try exercise, the more damage the disease does, until the crippling effects are so severe that it is too late for exercise to help.

The person suffering from arthritis, or a similar crippling affliction, should not begin without a doctor's approval, and at the beginning, he must be extremely careful. There is no better exercise than Yoga for these cases, because it is so gentle and gradual.

Rita was one of my students determined to help herself

with exercise. She was in great pain because of arthritis, in spite of cortisone injections, but wanted to try Yoga—she had tried everything else. In the beginning, it was painful to sense her pain as she attempted even the simplest movement. But as time went on it became enormously gratifying to watch her improvement from week to week. Slowly, but obviously, the joints relaxed as the blood was allowed to flow naturally through the body. Today she can perform all basic Yoga positions without pain and has regained complete flexibility. Rose, another arthritis sufferer who won't reveal her age but is probably around sixty-five, started Yoga a few months ago and already is experiencing a new lease on life because of the improvement in her condition.

Then there is Arlene who had had polio at thirteen and conquered the crippling effects but was left with complete rigidity of all muscles and joints, especially in the back area. She also happens to be a professional singer. She has so benefited from Yoga that recently when she auditioned for a singing role that also required her to dance, she was chosen for the part.

The way those people feel was summed up by one of my students whose bursitis disappeared after three months of Yoga. "It's a miracle!" she said. "No," I told her. "It was no miracle. You did it yourself with hard work."

The ailment that the American public is becoming increasingly concerned about is heart disease. Justifiably so, for heart and vascular ailments claim more than a million victims a year. Physicians are prescribing exercise as the best way to prevent heart attacks and even advising those with existing heart conditions to exercise. The trend is toward vigorous exercise, particularly jogging. Jogging, however, is not good for everyone. I think it is excellent to begin if you are young or in first-class physical condition.

But certainly no one past thirty-five or forty should start on such a strenuous activity without a medical okay. A recent California survey reported that there have been a number of deaths resulting from jogging. Presumably these people had had no preliminary medical examination or professional supervision of their jogging programs.

In our sedentary society, where the automobile is used even for an errand to the nearest corner, it would seem more logical to make people walk, at a vigorous pace, that is, before turning them loose to jog. Next to Yoga and swimming, the finest exercise is walking. It conditions the entire body without undue strain. But walking is becoming obsolete. We live in a quiet suburban neighborhood, ideal for walking, yet my husband and I are the only people who ever take walks in the area. I'm sure the neighbors regard us as eccentrics because of our strange habit of walking.

Any exercise started at an early age can be pursued throughout a lifetime without extra strain on the body. Anyone at age eighty who has played tennis, bicycled, or ice skated all his life can maintain his health and energy by continuing these activities. But it is only common sense that someone without previous training, unaccustomed to exercise, who suddenly begins tennis, handball, basketball, vigorous calisthenics, or running becomes an excellent candidate for an early heart attack.

Yoga can be started at any age without strain. The slow gradual movements build up energy without depleting the existing supply of it. Never forcing, never straining, the body builds its endurance by stretching to its capacity, holding the stretch, and progressing to increased capacity. The breathing exercises, performed by themselves and in conjunction with the positions, increase the supply of oxygen to the blood, naturally stimulating the heart. Doctors have recommended Yoga to combat the tension and stress at the

root of so many heart disorders. The part that Yoga plays in controlling weight and discouraging smoking and the consumption of alcohol adds to its benefits in keeping your heart healthy.

Yoga knows no age limit. I have students in my classes in their sixties and seventies, who, because of Yoga, have more physical vigor than people half their age. As a group they suffer less from the ailments that are so common among old people, discomforts like constipation, muscular stiffness, and low resistance to respiratory infections. Yoga also helps prevent arteriosclerosis, or hardening of the arteries, often suffered by the aged. It is, of course, much better to begin maintaining a healthy body with exercise in youth rather than trying to regain health in old age. But it is never too late to start Yoga. Because Yoga exercises are non-strenuous older people can find a plan of exercise feasible to carry out without undue fatigue. When it comes to the aging process, Yoga cannot stop the clock but it can slow it down. The Yogis have shown that old age does not have to be the time of feebleness, sickness, and depression it usually is with elderly people. Inactivity and the discouraged attitude that accompanies it accelerate the aging process. Yoga exercises decelerate and, in some cases, even reverse the process by increasing vitality, restoring flexibility, promoting the healthy functioning of organs and glands, improving blood circulation, controlling weight, and firming muscles. In addition, it helps relieve the nervous tension suffered by the elderly.

The people who receive the greatest Yoga benefits unconsciously are the hypochondriacs, with whom I sympathize because at one time I was one of them. They are the ones who start the course with a long list of aches and pains. Every week they tell me of another ill effect from the previous lesson. Then their bodies start to respond to Yoga with

a wonderful feeling of well-being and comes the day when all of a sudden nothing whatever hurts them. If I confront them with this change, they look at me blankly and say naturally they feel fine and have always felt fine.

The best cure for any sickness is prevention, and the best assurance for good health in middle and old age is learning how to care for the body in youth. Flexibility is no problem with little children, but it is surprising how much of that natural resiliency has already been lost by the time they become teen-agers. Nevertheless, their bodies are generally still pliable enough to get very fast results with Yoga, an advantage that makes it attractive to the impatient nature of the adolescent. Yoga is ideal for the teen-ager in many other respects. It attacks the problems that beset most teen-agers—overweight, poor complexion, and gawkiness by helping to control weight, stimulating proper circulation, and improving coordination and poise. In addition, the relaxation and breathing techniques help the adolescent better handle his emotions. It also improves his powers of concentration.

Physical fitness in schools is stressed today more than previously, but still the curriculum of many elementary schools does not include a physical education program but features only lukewarm exercises chosen by the classroom teacher. I have quite a few teachers in my classes who recognize the need for a physical program that teaches the children overall exercises that condition every part of the body. Some of these teachers have undertaken to teach Yoga exercises to their grade school charges and report an enthusiastic response from the children. One of them plans to teach Yoga in summer camp this year, and one of my very dedicated teacher students wants to try teaching it to brain-damaged children, and I am helping her plan a program.

Physical educators, especially in Europe, advocate an

exercise program begun at kindergarten age to lay the foundation for good health in adulthood, for what is instilled in the young child will be followed in later life. Physical education programs in our schools emphasize games and sports that most people cannot or do not care to continue as adults. It's a rare housewife who pursues volleyball to keep in shape.

If you ever practice when your children are around, you'll see how eager they'll be to try the exercises, too. Because they're so flexible, they'll be able to do them quite easily. If you're going to become demoralized watching your daughter assume the Lotus posture at first try while you're still trying to get your own knee to touch the floor, don't let her see you practice your Yoga until you've mastered a few of the positions. Teaching Yoga to children as part of their physical education will provide them with a feasible method to maintain flexibility and good health all their lives.

CHAPTER IX

YOGA AND SEX

To immediately squelch the rumors about sex and Yoga, let me assure you that you don't have to give up the first when you take up the second. One common misconception is that chastity is essential to the successful practice of Yoga. Some Yogis, swamis, and Indian Gurus do maintain that only the celibate can wholeheartedly devote himself to the study of the more advanced positions, breathing exercises, and meditation. They believe that true spirituality can be achieved only by those freed from sexual drives. There is no denying that sex and marriage certainly do take up one's energy and time. Without the responsibilities of family life, you could become more proficient in Yoga by being able to practice whenever you wanted to without out-

side distractions. As far as I know, none of the religious saints were ever married. Understandably so, for it would be a relatively easy task to become a saint when one didn't have to earn a living for a family and contend with a demanding spouse and noisy children. But leaving the wife and kids doesn't make one a saint, nor does abstinence from sexual intercourse make one spiritual. The person who equates sexual intercourse with spiritual defilement as a rule is hiding his own psychological problems behind a shield of distorted virtue.

The association of sexual abstinence with Yoga is fostered by the fanatic Hindu followers of Yoga. The sexual life of the Hindu is a continual struggle against contradictions. His own sexual drives, constantly stimulated, are in direct conflict with his society's view that the ideal Hindu is chaste. His family life is by turn indulgent, severe, and restrictive, with the woman occupying a degraded position in it. The role of the Hindu woman represents failure from the day she was born, because she should have been a son. Married off by her parents at an early age, as a wife she continues in her inferior role, even among the upper classes, becoming a servant to her husband, trotting humbly behind him, eating only after he has finished, and generally being banned from male society. The primitive idea still prevails that a woman is unclean during menstruation and after childbirth.

Regarded as a passive, servile cow, her one purpose is to bear sons. It is only with the birth of a son that the Hindu woman is raised from her lowly position. This is her season of exaltation, for since the father does not want to be bothered with the messy aspects of raising children during their early years, the mother is completely in charge. As a baby and young child, the Indian son is pampered, coddled, and smothered in mother love. He is nursed to a standing-up

age and often sleeps with his mother until the age of ten or twelve. This type of mother-son relationship in Western society has been proven to be harmful to the child, conducive to homosexuality, and at the very least a hindrance to his chances for a healthy sexual relationship when he is an adult.

When the son is about ten or twelve the father steps in, wielding his authority with an iron hand, and rules the lives of his children until the day he dies. Even after the son marries, he is still treated as a child, expected to defer to his father's wishes.

In his autobiography Gandhi writes that he was not even expected to converse with his bride in his father's presence, as if by ignoring her, the girl and his own sexual role as husband could be willed out of existence.

Another important factor shaping the Hindu's sexual attitude is the belief that man's vital energy is concentrated in his seminal fluid, stored in a cavity in his skull. Every orgasm depletes him of his physical and spiritual powers. This belief often leads to an obsessive preoccupation to preserve the semen, preferably by preventing discharge through total abstinence from masturbation and sexual intercourse. Some who succumb to the temptations of the flesh go through involved maneuvers to prevent ejaculation during intercourse or to bring the discharged semen back into their bodies. Obviously, this practice is not widespread and is too difficult for general birth control

The sex act is physically and spiritually degrading to the Indian. To alleviate his guilt, he shifts the blame for his sexual impulses to the poor woman, labeling her the temptress and aggressor. Look at the man's face in many of India's erotic sculptures: his expression would lead us to believe that he's merely an innocent bystander in the depicted sexual carryings-on.

Ironically, the Indian's way of life is geared to incite sexual stimulation. In most aspects they are prudish and mid-Victorian in their sexual attitudes. It has only recently been permissible to kiss on the cinema screen. Unmarried young men and women are not expected to speak to each other. Dating is unthinkable. Yet it is a land abounding in phallic symbol cults, sex-charged mythology, temples with sculptures and paintings graphically displaying unbelievably intricate positions of the sex act, and merchants doing an unrivalled trade in aphrodisiacs. Also, the spicy food the Indian favors, his everyday consumption of hot peppers and strong curries, increases his sexual appetite. All in all, his environment intensifies his sexual dilemma.

To the Indian, simultaneously stimulated and repressed, the ideal and envied man is the Yogi, who experiences no loss of his precious seminal fluids, who can abjure sex altogether, and is, therefore, rewarded with magical powers such as the ability to become invisible or to levitate himself. This last, of course, is fiction, but it is true that the Yogi can control his sex urges and desires. Through constant practice of external and internal Yoga exercises, he can regulate the function of every part of his body, every muscle, gland, and inner organ. He can direct the action of the thyroid and pituitary glands, the muscle in his penis, and control his erection. Meditation and the ability to regulate his breathing enable him to master his emotions as well. And his great emotional control, in turn, further restrains his physical urges. The Yogi's diet also contributes to his sexual self-control, for he foregoes rich, overly seasoned spicy foods in favor of bland, non-stimulating foods.

But although the Yogi is in charge of his sexual impulses, he neither suppresses them nor denies their existence. Yoga does not impose chastity, celibacy, or continence, because that would be in opposition to the laws of nature. To go

against nature is wrong. On the other hand, regarding sex as a natural function is not equivalent to license. Copulation is not like taking a drink of water when you're thirsty, for man is on a higher level than animals and so necessarily should be his mating habits. Yoga advocates the exercise of discrimination and control in sexual activities, as in other activities, to achieve self-realization. In sexual intercourse with someone he loves, man can use his body to attain spiritual and physical bliss.

Sex is very much a part of Yoga symbolism, a most obvious example being the legend of Kundalini already mentioned. The serpent is often used as a sexual symbol in the early folklore of all peoples, as for instance in the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. There the snake and carnal knowledge led to man's expulsion from the paradise of Eden. By contrast, in the Yoga Kundalini legend the height of self-realization is reached with the union of male and female. Here is the difference between the Western and Yoga attitude toward sex. Western teachings say sex is bad, a weakness of the flesh to be denied. Yoga recognizes the tremendous force of sexual energy as part of man's total energy to be utilized in his quest for self-realization.

Yoga does not try to repress man's sexual drive, because it realizes how damaging sexual repression is. Sex everywhere in the world, except maybe among remote aboriginal tribes, has evolved from a natural pleasurable function into an intense moral and psychological problem. After more than a hundred years of Victorian repression, the United States is being rocked with a sexual explosion. We are bombarded with sex in advertising, books, movies, and plays. The fear of pregnancy, the club used to keep "nice" girls from indulging in sex, has been eliminated with the Pill. Suddenly our society has awaked to SEX and doesn't seem to know how to cope with it.

Much could be learned from Yoga, which channels sexual energy and directs it into other creative areas. The Yogi sublimates his sexual drives into other outlets for his own benefit and often for the benefit of society. Freud made it clear how the individual turned his sexual drives into other areas of activity. Thus, the spinster, with no children of her own, could find an outlet for her emotions as a teacher or nurse. The Yogi who has retreated to the monastic life is celibate without effort or denial, for all his energies are sublimated into the rigors of advanced Yoga. But there are also those Yogis who are householders, fulfilling their role as husbands and using their knowledge of Yoga to enhance their sexual life.

Basic Yoga teachings are concerned with the establishment of a satisfactory sex life for physical and mental health. Yoga can increase sexual pleasure in many ways. It can be instrumental in changing an inhibiting attitude, for Yoga contains none of the prudishness toward the body and its natural functions that has been an integral part of Western culture for so long. The way one feels about sex plays a subtle but real part in the ability to enjoy its pleasures. Sampling the current best sellers and movies should convince anyone that society is certainly becoming more open-minded about sex and nudity, but the very manner in which four letter words and bare bosoms are self-consciously flaunted indicate that an intelligent attitude has not yet been attained. Even the generation now in its twenties, with its emphasis on sexual freedom, is still reacting to the ideas they were taught as children that there is something dirty about sex. In my opinion it will take at least two generations to outgrow these notions. Sex education now being introduced into the curriculum of many school systems, if presented intelligently, can help society arrive at a healthy sexual attitude.

In any successful personal relationship there must be a balance of give and take. If one person is selfish and inconsiderate, the other person becomes resentful and hurt and the relationship suffers. Nowhere is this situation more intense than in the marriage bed. A husband intent only on his own gratification often leaves his wife unsatisfied. In time she may become cool to his demands; he may then regard her as unresponsive, aggravating their relationship even more, and this situation very often leads to divorce. As I have said before, the practice of Yoga exerts a subtle change on the personality. As you continue, you will become more patient and understanding toward other people. These qualities will carry over to your sexual life, and as you become more concerned for your partner's gratification, you will evoke a responsiveness that will add to your mutual pleasures.

However, not all sexual problems are based on psychological causes as used to be generally assumed. More and more current scientific investigations are attributing sexual inadequacies to physical causes. With some sexually indifferent or incompetent people the problem may be glandular. These people find that Yoga exercises reawaken their sexual desire and improve their ability to perform the sex act. Many Yoga postures were deliberately designed to stimulate the sexual appetite and correct sluggishly functioning endocrine glands, which include the gonads or sex glands. The Plough and the Locust are two of the best exercises for stimulating the gonads. The inverted postures such as the Headstand, Shoulderstand, and Camel improve the functioning of the pituitary gland, the master gland influencing most basic physical functions. Glandular problems affecting sexual performance can be corrected in a short time by practicing Yoga holds and positions.

Yoga also acts as an equalizer, for while it stimulates the

sexual appetite and awakens dormant desires, at the same time it teaches control of sexual urges.

As a rule, my male students don't discuss their sexual problems or relate their improvements to me or to the class, but they can't help dropping veiled remarks or disguise their joy in their achievements. Yoga practice can stabilize man's control of his erection and correct premature ejaculation, a common source of unhappiness in marriage. The increased ability to restrain ejaculation, that is gained through Yoga, leads to the adjustments necessary to conform to the woman's slower achievement of her climax.

A woman who couldn't experience an orgasm was usually directed to psychotherapy, where she'd try to work through her problem or learn to adjust to it. However, now doctors know that sometimes the cause of frigidity is muscular. Improving the vaginal-urinary muscle tone by contracting these muscles can help increase a woman's pleasure during sexual intercourse.

Although many of the Yoga exercises benefit the gonads, remember the sex glands do not lead a separate existence. They are part of your body and are affected by the general condition of your body just as the digestive system is. A person who keeps his body at the peak of condition through Yoga will lead a healthy vital life and as a result can also enjoy an active satisfying sex life for many years. Dr. William Masters, director of the Reproductive Biology Research Foundation in St. Louis, and his assistant Mrs. Virginia Johnson, whose book *Human Sexual Response* provides a scientific study of sexual relations, have stressed the importance of good health for effective sexual functioning. They have also cited fatigue and tension among the most common causes of sexual failures. With the Yoga exercises and breathing you can effectively combat these two deterrents to successful sexual activity.

No list of the ways Yoga helps to achieve a happy sexual life would be complete without reminding you that Yoga exercises can give you a more desirable body. And after all, attracting a partner is the first step on the road to sexual happiness. Confidence in your own body also helps get rid of inhibitions.

There are Yoga teachers who work with specific sex problems, but I personally teach Yoga for the overall benefit rather than stressing solutions to particular problems. Therefore most of my students start Yoga completely unaware of these particular benefits, yet many of them report the favorable ways that Yoga has affected their sexual experiences. One of my students, whom I will call Betty, told me that her inability to experience an orgasm had cost her many hours in analysis discussing her problem and many more hours worrying about it with her husband. After three months of Yoga practice, she reached her first orgasm. From then on she and her husband began experiencing a mutually gratifying sex life. Another student, who after the birth of her fourth child developed an aversion to sex in spite of pregnancy insurance provided by the Pill (one of the Pill's undesirable side effects), found that her former healthy enjoyment of sexual intercourse returned with intensive Yoga practice. The wife of a man who had become seriously interested in Yoga told me that at age fifty his sex urges had dwindled to zero, but at fifty-five he had become a new man full of vigor in the marital bed. Many men who think they've reach the age of impotency find that Yoga can rejuvenate them.

The American male's reputation as a poor lover was based on his 1-2-3 approach to coitus with little regard for his mate's satisfaction. He judged his own sexual performance on quantity rather than quality. But as the liberated female began demanding her sexual rights, she protested

the neglect of her satisfaction in the sex act. Both the male who didn't prolong his erection and the female who didn't reach an orgasm began to feel sexually inadequate. The new demands and expectations burdened sexual partners with new tensions to diminish their pleasure. Inability to give or receive the height of sexual gratification often became an obsession, driving many to the analyst's couch.

Grim determination to enjoy sex is self-defeating. Learn to relax with Yoga. As tension subsides, the benefits manifest themselves. Sexual stimulation, sexual control, and the ingredients for a happy and harmonious sex life will evolve naturally with Yoga.

CHAPTER X

YOGA AND SMOKING

To the compulsive smoker Yoga offers a way to stop. I will tell you how. I don't have to tell you why. Ever since 1964 when the Surgeon General's Report on Smoking and Health warned that cigarette smoking is a health hazard, statistics have been piling up linking cigarettes with not only cancer and heart disease but a whole list of disorders, including emphysema, sinus trouble, bronchitis, ulcers, arthritis, and migraine. However, in spite of the mounting evidence that smoking will shorten your life, millions continue to smoke. And the stop-smoking campaigns that are in full force at present, relying heavily on scare tactics, have made barely a dent on the smoking habits of Americans, who at last tally were spending nine billion dollars a year on cigarettes.

In the past the smoker confronted with the question, "Why do you smoke?" could glibly answer, "Because I enjoy it." But in view of the fact that the smoker is shortening his own life, that kind of rationalizing just doesn't stand up. Why then does he smoke? Because he can't stop.

I am aware that there were lots of smokers who read the articles on the dangers of smoking and said, "That's it. I'm kicking the habit starting now." And they were successful. Because for some smokers smoking constitutes just that — a habit that can be licked with a modicum of effort. But for others, I contend that smoking is an addiction as surely as the compulsive use of alcohol and drugs is an addiction. Like any addiction, it is a psychological and physiological sickness that puts the afflicted at the mercy of his compulsion, sometimes forcing him to sacrifice even his dignity and self-respect.

This was illustrated very vividly for me in Germany after World War II when GI cigarettes became currency. A carton of cigarettes, purchased at the PX for $1.50, could be sold for as much as $100 on the black market. Jewels, heirlooms and hard to believe, but true mothers, sisters, and daughters were sold for cigarettes. Any GI smoking in the street would attract a following of Germans who would fight like vultures over his discarded stub.

And what else but an addiction could compel intelligent people to continue after their doctors have specifically warned them they were courting death by smoking? Even an intellectual giant like Sigmund Freud suffered and died from cancer of the mouth and throat because of excessive cigar smoking.

Another characteristic that marks smoking as an addiction is the painful withdrawal symptoms the chain smoker experiences when his system is deprived of nicotine: dizziness, nausea, headaches, vomiting, tremors, mental depression, and anxiety.

I am very much aware of what it means to be a cigarette addict because I used to be one. I started smoking at seventeen, when I was living with relatives. They gave me strict instructions never to smoke. Resenting and hating them, I began smoking as a means of getting back at them. To a youngster a cigarette can be a psychological symbol of all his desires and frustrations, his rebellion, his yearnings for social status, acceptance, and maturity.

During the many years I smoked, sometimes as many as sixty cigarettes a day, I felt guilty and desperately wanted to stop. I only remember two days during that time when I did not smoke. One was when I had my tonsils removed (I smoked the next day) and the other, the day of the accident when I was semi-conscious and couldn't move. I smoked up to my last labor pain, and when I opened my eyes, I reached for a cigarette before asking about the baby. How well I remember the panic-stricken hunts through all purses and pockets in the house for a cigarette and the 2:00 a.m. drives to find an open drugstore, if I had run out. There was nothing I could do without being fortified by a cigarette from the time I awoke, sleepily groping for a pack, until I went to sleep. I was an addict, a "nicotinic," and learned to live with the fact that, like the alcoholic, "just one" and I'd be hooked again.

Yoga enabled me to stop smoking because it operates on the addiction on many levels. You don't *have* to be an addict to stop smoking with Yoga. Yoga will make it easier for any kind of smoker to kick his habit, but to the addict it will be a life saver.

It may sound as if I'm contradicting myself when I tell you: Do not go into Yoga to stop smoking. You can't grit your teeth and jump into Yoga as you would into a cold bath. The idea that This Is Going To Be Good For Me If It Kills Me just won't work with Yoga—not even to accomplish a goal as beneficial as giving up smoking. There is no

pressure in Yoga to accomplish a goal. Once you bring that kind of tension to Yoga you nullify its results. Nothing can be forced in Yoga. Begin Yoga because you will enjoy it. All the benefits come naturally, including the desire and steadfastness to give up smoking. Yoga can succeed where other methods have failed, because it is an effective substitute for smoking.

Several times in my smoking career I went through all sorts of antics to give up cigarettes. The first time I tried to quit I formed a no-smoking partnership with my sister-in-law. How proud we were when we announced to the world that we had smoked our last cigarette. We spent hours on the phone comparing symptoms and encouraging each other. And we ate and ate and ate. My freedom from nicotine lasted four months—until the day we went shopping for dresses, because neither of us could fit into any of our clothes. We both discovered we had increased our girth by two dress sizes. We tried to laugh at ourselves in our outsize dresses, but the laughter wasn't very sincere. I went back to cigarettes. (My sister-in-law stuck it out, gained up to fifty pounds during the next two years, and has just recently begun to take off the weight since I introduced her to Yoga.)

After I had had my brief taste of a cigarette free life, the thought of stopping never left me. I knew I needed a substitute and this time turned to chewing gum. Every time I had the urge for a cigarette, I would pop a piece of gum into my mouth, turning from a chain smoker into a chain chewer. When I next visited my dentist, the condition of my teeth and gums was so bad he warned me that if I continued chewing gum I wouldn't have any teeth left. As a sacrifice to dental health, I lit up again. There were other attempts with other substitutes like tranquilizers and commercial medicines—all just as harmful and inadequate.

Sound familiar? Of course, because many people go

through much the same motions to stop smoking. And they fail, as I did, because in most cases they want to fail. They want to prove it can't be done. They would *like* to stop smoking, but they don't really *want* to give it up, because they cannot face a permanent smokeless existence.

They never shake feeling sorry for themselves for being deprived of their need. Giving up smoking permanently can only work when the person is ready to accept freedom from nicotine joyfully instead of dejectedly. That is why the substitute for smoking must prove satisfying and represent purpose. Yoga is that kind of substitute.

Yoga will train your body and mind to want to stop smoking. When you begin the Yoga breathing exercises, you will be bringing more air into your lungs than they have known for years. As you continue and begin to master the breathing exercises, you will feel your lungs clearing up, nasal congestion relieved, and your throat no longer feeling like the proverbial inside of a motorman's glove. You won't be so anxious to light up and lose that country fresh-air feeling—the real thing, not the mentholated taste advertised in a certain brand of cigarettes. With the increased supply of oxygen in the system, the desire to smoke is killed.

The other exercises, too, will begin to have their effect on your body, providing you with a new sense of physical well-being that you won't want to decrease by smoking. Gradually your body will begin to reject cigarettes. The more engrossed in Yoga you become, the stronger will be your desire to stop. As you gain proficiency in the various positions, you will be spurred on to work toward the more complex holds. You'll discover the effects of smoking are an obstacle to your performance. Pride in your achievements will begin tipping the scales against smoking. You will realize that Yoga and smoking are physically incom-

patible. From then, it is merely a matter of time until you decide to do without cigarettes.

Yoga also works on the tension that many people claim is their reason for smoking. Actually, it is mostly the smoking that causes the tension that cigarettes are being used to relieve. Yoga helps eliminate the tension no matter how it is caused. Because the exercises act as a relaxant, you can begin to lose tension before you stop smoking. With less tension there is less need to smoke. You will find, as you smoke less, you are experiencing even less tension, and therefore are not so likely to use a cigarette as a tranquilizer. As with so many other effects of Yoga the process is a circular one, with your body and Yoga working together for your benefit.

When you first quit smoking, you will experience that old familiar yen for a cigarette. The commonest ploy for coping with that yen is to put something else in the mouth—usually loaded with calories. When the yen inevitably returns, in goeś another hard candy, candy bar, martini, bag of potato chips, another twenty pounds. I think the most frequent excuse for not giving up smoking is the three little words, "I'll get fat." Well, oxygen doesn't contain a single calorie and that's what Yoga teaches you to use with deadly effectiveness in annihilating that recurrent yen for a cigarette. You're able to give up smoking without the aid of gum, candy, liquor, or other fattening foods.

When you get the urge to smoke, practice the breathing exercises. You can do the Complete Breath without raising your shoulders and the Abdominal Breath anywhere—at the office, the PTA meeting, the check-out line at the supermarket—without anyone noticing. The rhythmic breathing will suppress the desire for a cigarette. The forceful breathing of the Bellows Breath, which you will probably prefer to do in private, will get rid of the poisonus tobacco pollu-

tion that has settled on the walls of your lungs. As time goes on, the urge to smoke will appear less and less frequently. Then the effects of the exercises and the breathing practiced in your regular exercise period will be carried over during the day.

Once you've joined the ranks of nonsmokers, you'll be able to stay there. The mind and body will become attuned to doing without cigarettes. Other pleasures will begin to compensate for smoking: better health, more pep, a sharper sense of taste and smell, and an improvement in your looks. Let me warn you, though, the desire to smoke may still creep up on you even long after you've given it up. But your firmness of purpose will enable you to control that desire. If it persists, a few Yoga breaths will banish it. Because of Yoga you will be stronger than it.

The smokers in my class and I have a gentlemen's agreement: they don't admit it, and I don't question them. I can detect it, of course, at their first deep inhalation. Many of them started the course because they suffered from shortness of breath, wheezing, sinus conditions, or perpetual colds. Even they begin to breathe better in spite of their smoking. Harry was one of the confirmed chain smokers who had started Yoga for the fun of it. But, to his great surprise, he took to it as a duck to water. He was about thirty-five years old with a good, but stiff, body. As his back became flexible, he was able to try and master the most intricate Yoga exercises. Once he discovered that smoking interfered with the hold of the positions he tapered off (he was one of the few who could) and eventually quit. He admitted to me that he had always wanted to stop smoking but had never known how to go about it.

For many, Yoga has been the way to go about it. Yoga can provide you with the incentive, means, and firmness of purpose to stop smoking forever.

CHAPTER XI

YOGA AND INTELLIGENT NUTRITION

Good nutrition is the foundation on which all good health is built. The guiding principles of the Yogi are to eat what can benefit him the most and not to eat what can harm him. Anyone can use these same principles of Yoga for good nutrition once he has learned what these beneficial and harmful foods are. Most people, if they give any thought at all to the nutritional value of their diet, are guided by the fallacy that they can indulge themselves in anything edible as long as they eat some of the good stuff, too. But eating the right food cannot compensate for the harm done to the body by eating the wrong food. In nutrition, as in medicine, that ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

Malnutrition in America has been making headlines

lately. It is indeed shameful that there exist in the United States distressed areas where people suffer from malnutrition because of poverty. But national surveys have also revealed that malnutrition is not exclusively a problem of the poor. Those who involuntarily suffer from inadequate diets are a relative handful compared to the millions who create their own nutritional deficiencies in the midst of plenty. Although it seems ludicrous that a nation with our abundant resources should suffer from malnutrition, it is no doubt because of that very affluence that we do. Not only do we stuff ourselves with too much food, but no other nation consumes as much devitalized, denatured, overprocessed, synthetic food as we do. Money alone does not alleviate malnutrition; it may, in fact, aggravate it. This problem has even been recognized by President Nixon who, while acknowledging that people need sufficient food income, emphasizes that "what matters finally is what people buy with the money they have. People must be educated to the choosing of proper food." And, I might add, to the rejecting of improper foods. For overeating the wrong foods is instrumental in giving rise to the many chronic and degenerative diseases Americans are prey to.

Many times digestive problems are danger signals that something is wrong with the organism as a whole, but too often these symptoms are camouflaged with antacids and alkalizers instead of being investigated and remedied by sensible diet. Certainly a major reason for the unusually fine health enjoyed by Yogis and dedicated students of Yoga is the stress they place on wholesome food. Americans could find no better guide "to the choosing of proper food" than to follow the nutritional principles of Yoga.

The prevailing public opinion is that to be a Yogi or serious Yoga student one's diet should consist solely of sunflower seeds, tiger's milk, soya bean products, kelp, and

similar foodstuffs, and that he should patronize the health food stores for total subsistence. This is not so. Yoga teachings are primarily concerned with the freshness and cleanliness of food. With a few exceptions, most foods which meet Yoga standards can be bought in any good quality food store.

Misinformed Yoga fans and health food faddists also proclaim that good health can be achieved only with organically grown food. They make dire predictions that we will all be poisoned *en masse* by the chemical fertilizers and insecticides used on commercially grown food. Because of these scare tactics, it seems that anything sells as long as it is labeled organic, be it vitamins or soap. I have my own personal doubts about some of these products claiming to be organic. The only way to be absolutely positive that you are getting bona fide organically grown food is by growing it in your own backyard.

I don't deny that our food is subjected to chemical poisons nor do I dispute the fact that we are victims of pollution. However, people obsessed with eating *only* organically grown products are to me in the same category as those who build their own atom bomb shelters—they may be the only survivors when everyone else is wiped out but they will be terribly lonely. If you can buy organically grown foods without too much trouble or expense, by all means do, because it is much healthier. Also, organically grown fruit and vegetables or an organically fed chicken and the eggs it lays are more flavorful.

But while the danger of pollution through our food is a real one, the fact is that the few particles of poisons we swallow involuntarily will not affect us extensively in this generation, unless our bodies are run down by disease and malnutrition, just as a cold will more easily take hold on a run-down body. That is why Yoga is a most effective

weapon to fight the menaces to health. The harmful effects of toxins and irritants can be alleviated by keeping the body, especially the organs of elimination and detoxication, in excellent condition. The way to achieve this is by practicing the exercises and breathing techniques, avoiding harmful stimulants, and eating nutritional foods. There are also certain common sense precautions we can take that make it very difficult for harmful chemicals to affect us, such as thoroughly washing fruits and vegetables with a brush and peeling them when we know the skin has been heavily sprayed, as in the case of cucumbers, for instance.

Since the present influence of the Orient has been making its impact on Western culture, Oriental diets have also become fashionable. The most prominent of these is the Zen macrobiotic, or Japanese brown rice diet as it is better known. Many people ask me if I am macrobiotic, for they associate and confuse Yoga with Zen Buddhism. Although similarities exist and allegedly Zen developed as a branch of Yoga, they are not the same, and the macrobiotic diet is far removed from the Yogic way of eating. Macrobiotic does not only refer to eating, it is a way of thinking and a way of living. Supposedly it can prevent and cure any disease, which may very well be true. It prohibits eating many foods we are accustomed to, with emphasis on eggplant, tomatoes, and potatoes, which are strictly taboo. Since I adore those three foods, I personally have little interest in macrobiotic teachings. It is, of course, more than doing without eggplant. To study and comprehend the intricacies of this science is a lifelong undertaking for the Oriental. For the Westerner, true adherence is extremely complicated, not only because of the philosophy, but because some of the required foods are almost impossible to obtain anywhere but in the East. Many food fanatics follow the diet haphazardly, sometimes with tragic results, as in the case

of one woman whose death was attributed to eating brown rice exclusively.

That is why many ignorant people have labeled this diet dangerous. On the same kind of distorted evidence, people who don't understand Yoga accuse it of being dangerous. I was confronted with this charge by a physician who told me about two young girls he had treated. They had taken up Yoga and become dangerously ill, he said. As he elaborated on his accusation, it turned out that not Yoga, but the ignorance of the girls themselves, was to blame. These girls believed that when you take up Yoga, you must become a vegetarian. They further interpreted that to mean eating vegetables to the exclusion of everything else, which they did for a long time. Naturally they developed sicknesses caused by vitamin deficiency.

Although slowly coming into its own as a modern down-to-earth way to good health, there is still much mysticism surrounding Yoga, supported mostly by the young who are searching for "meaning outside this hemisphere." They somehow link weird diets with Yoga. One of these presently attracting misguided Yoga fans is the grass seed diet, in which the sprouts of the grass seeds you grow yourself are supposed to endow you with super-health and all kinds of powers.

As for vegetarianism: the concept that vegetarianism is a fundamental precept of Yoga is erroneous. Yogic writings, as such, contain no dogma either anti-carnivorous or pro-vegetarian. Vegetarianism is associated with Yoga because of its Hindu practitioners, for most sects of Hinduism forbid the slaughtering of animals. Others, not Hindus, believe in vegetarianism as a purely personal credo distinct from any religious affiliation. These people, who consider it morally wrong to kill an animal for food or clothing, will not eat any form of animal flesh or wear a fur coat. There are some

who will eat eggs, some only eggs that have not been fertilized, and some no eggs whatsoever. There are also some vegetarians who won't eat dairy products.

The true Yogi does not consider vegetarianism in itself essential to a spiritual life; nor does he consider meat eating alone unholy. The Yogi *does* distinguish between foods either as *sattvic* or *rajasic*. Sattvic is interpreted as clean, light food that is easily digestible, agreeable to the eye and palate, and soothing to the stomach. In contrast, rajasic foods are heavy, difficult to digest, lie heavy in the stomach, cause sluggishness of the organs, and clog up the system. Also included in the rajasic category are the spicy, hot, exciting foods that over-stimulate the nervous system or sexual glands. All unclean, rotten, and impure food is labeled *tamasic*.

Flesh foods fall into the rajasic category, because they are indeed heavy and difficult to digest. Your body has to work harder and longer to digest meat, especially beef, pork, and lamb, than other foods. For verification, you only have to make the test yourself. Compare how you feel after eating a six-course Chinese dinner, consisting mainly of vegetables and rice, and after a one-course steak dinner. Two hours after eating the Chinese meal, your system will feel light, but after the steak dinner the heavy feeling will still be there.

By and large, this is due to the great amount of cholesterol present in meat. In the last few years the public has been made cholesterol conscious by unnerving statistics of increasing heart disease and arteriosclerosis. Both these diseases, the layman has been told, are aggravated by cholesterol rich foods, which are the fatty foods of animal origin. Butter and animal fats were declared the enemy, and an alarmed public learned to cook with polyunsaturated fats and oil. This helped to reduce the intake of cooking fats

into the daily diet, but the problem is far from solved, because Americans eat as much meat and eggs as they ever did. These consistently high amounts of meat and eggs consumed are the sources of the excessive cholesterol in the American diet. Compared to the European who makes it a practice to use globs of butter for the rich sauces typical of continental cooking, Americans do not use much butter; still, we are second only to the Argentinian in our daily consumption of meat. And meat, to the average American, means except for an occasional lamb chop beef and pork, the two types of meat containing the most cholesterol. Medical research has shown that the southern Negro, whose diet consists mainly of pork products, is the largest sufferer of hypertension in the United States. Lamb is not quite so high in fat. Next down the list are veal and chicken.

Urging Americans to cut down on meat is almost considered an infringement on the American way of life. I would venture to say that the average American has three meat meals a day—bacon for breakfast, a ham sandwich, hamburger, or hot dog for lunch, and some kind of meat again for dinner. He has been led to believe that meat is necessary to fulfill the daily protein requirement. Yet nutrition studies have revealed that nations affected by meat shortages during World War II and forced to supplement their diet with other protein foods were generally healthier than during their meat-eating years. Today, countries where meat consumption is at a minimum report a correspondingly low incidence of circulatory and rheumatoid diseases so prevalent in this country.

There is as much, sometimes even more, protein in fish, eggs, and cheese as in meat. Nuts and legumes such as peas, lentils and beans are some of the finest sources of protein. Indeed, there is protein in every living food—in all green leafy vegetables. Yoga considers this last group of

foods the best source of protein and other essential nutrients, because it is the original source. Cattle, lambs, and pigs, the chief suppliers of our meat, get their required protein fron. vegetables. A steer gets his protein from the grass, and we get the protein from the steer. In other words, the protein from meat is strictly secondhand. Some of the vitality in that vegetable life has already been used up by the animal, giving the meat eater a less concentrated amount of food value. The Yogi prefers his protein firsthand and so passes up meat in favor of foods he considers more beneficial.

Of course, the Yogi who is a vegetarian does not eat only vegetables. He follows an excellent well-rounded diet containing all the essential elements for the body's maintenance and repair—protein, carbohydrates, vitamins, minerals, and fat. He eats all vegetables and fruit, fresh and dried, nuts, whole wheat grains found in cereals and bread, natural sugar and honey, and dairy products. A diet like this is the best kind to maintain good health and provide a great amount of energy and stamiṅā.

The Yogi claims that those who become engrossed in Yoga will learn to prefer sattvic foods and forego the rajasic and tamasic food. This is absolutely true. I personally have undergone a gradual change of likes and dislikes in my daily eating, and all my serious students report the same effect of Yoga on their diets. Heavy and spicy foods interfere with Yoga practice. As you continue in Yoga, you will discover that your appetite will naturally adjust itself, because you will want to eat lightly to successfully execute the exercises and feel well at all times. I have stopped eating meat because I feel better without it, and now have no trouble maintaining my weight. Even the leanest meat is a "fattening food" in the sense that it is not easily digestible. Although vegetables are the mainstay of my diet, I am not a

vegetarian, for I also eat fish and eggs. And in the summertime, when my husband grills steak outdoors, I often succumb to the aroma and have a piece. As I say, Yoga requires moderation, not deprivation.

Another standard the Yogi uses, and anyone can use, to intelligently judge the nutritional value of food is its naturalness. The food eaten closest to its natural condition will benefit you the most. Food that has been processed, bleached, refined, and synthesized often does more harm than good.

What better place to start applying the standard of naturalness than to bread. Our "staff of life" is the soft white packaged variety we buy at the supermarket. To make white bread, the original brown wheat flour must first be bleached, a process that drains it of its natural vitamins and other substances. This procedure originated because people preferred white bread and other white flour products for their eye appeal. The miller gladly complied because he discovered that white flour could be stored indefinitely without spoiling. As artificial vitamins became popular, he was able to sell the vitamins he had stripped from the flour to the vitamin manufacturer. Thus, while people are deprived of the natural vitamins and wheat germ contained in whole wheat flour, they are in the ironic position of buying them back in second- or third-hand concentrations in capsule form. The bread the consumer ended up with was pure starch.

The same bleaching process is applied to other white flour products such as noodles, spaghetti, cereal, and cake. They are depleted of their original vitamins and left with only carbohydrates, which are difficult to digest and highly acid forming. When the lack of nutritional value in white bread and these other products became evident, it was necessary to enrich or fortify this food, that is, to put in some syn-

thetic vitamins to compensate for the natural vitamins that had been removed. To retard spoilage, food preservatives were often added, some of which are presently under investigation for allegedly containing harmful ingredients.

Although bread today does not have the nutritive quality it once had, you can find some with more nutritional value than commercially packaged bread. There is good bread available in the health food stores, but bakery bread is more practical to buy and better tasting. By trying a variety of whole wheat, pumpernickel, and rye bread, you're sure to find some that everyone in your family will like. Also, wheat germ is a useful supplement to food, since it is lacking in bread.

Like white flour, white polished rice is also pure starch, practically worthless as a nutrient. But brown rice in its natural form is an excellent food. There are also other kinds of unpolished rice that are quite delicious available from different countries. Try the gourmet shops for these.

Refined sugar is another product that is stripped of its natural food value. The natural sugar cane or sugar beet undergoes many stages of refinement, including the addition of carbon dioxide. I once visited a sugar factory in Barbados, and the stench of the burning sulphur fumes which the sugar juices are subjected to was an unpleasant memory for days. Although devoid of nutrients, these little white antiseptic granules are a powerful stimulant, capable of giving you quick energy but just as quickly letting you down.

The excess consumption of refined sugar and its products is the prime cause of tooth decay, surely the most prevalent disease in the United States today. To counteract dental cavities the chemical fluoride has been added to the water, despite warnings from some health authorities that it may damage other parts of the body. A much safer and

more direct way to help ensure dental health is to cut down on the intake of refined sugar and the cake, cookies, and candy it is used in.

Refined sugar is an artificial product from a natural food, but sugar substitutes are pure synthetics. Yet as people became calorie conscious, synthetic sweeteners and synthetically sweetened products became increasingly popular The harmfulness of saccharin was investigated as early as 1910, and lately studies are turning up strong evidence to the conclusion that articial sweeteners are a danger to health and should certainly not be used as casually as they are, most likely not at all.

Learn to abandon refined sugar and artificial sweeteners and use honey as a sweetener. If you don't like domestic honey, you'll be surprised to discover that there exists a variety of honey from all over the world which I think is far superior in flavor.

Salt, too, is a pure synthetic and possesses many harmful qualities when used in excess. Vegetable or sea salt may be substituted for table salt in your cooking. I personally prefer sea salt, which is a natural very gentle salt. It may cost a few pennies more, but is better tasting and lends more flavor to your food than table salt.

The combination of salt and nuts is definitely habit forming. People who start to eat salted nuts can't stop, which is primarily why they are considered fattening. While nuts do contain oil, they are not very fattening when eaten in their natural state—the only way they should be eaten. You cannot always find fresh nuts, but packaged unsalted nuts are usually available. They are a most valuable source of protein. If you're watching your weight, however, don't eat them between meals, as anything eaten unnecessarily between meals adds weight. You can introduce them in desserts or as a dessert by themselves.

Whenever you can, serve fresh produce. The availability and convenience of canned and frozen food, plus the advertising that would have you believe they're as healthful as fresh food, too often lead the housewife to take the lazy way out. So she opens a package or can, serves these lifeless unappetizing vegetables to her family and tells her children: "Eat your vegetables; they're good for you." Under the circumstances, we can't blame children for despising vegetables. The extra nutrients you'll be serving your family when you give them fresh food are well worth the extra few minutes and added effort it takes to snap the beans or shell the peas. And the taste of properly cooked fresh vegetables is far superior. Your children will probably be asking for some of these beans and peas raw because they taste so good. In the canning process chemicals are added which, although approved as harmless by the Food and Drug Administration, can't possibly do you any good. Most important in the case for fresh food is the fact that all canned food is precooked and all frozen food preblanched. Any heat treatment of foods causes depletion of nutritional values.

On the whole, the American mother is quite concerned about feeding her family nutritional meals. Her job is not an easy one, especially in the light of all the pressures from her children to buy the artificially flavored, presweetened cereals, candy, and cakes that the television commercials so blatantly tempt them with between Superman and Bozo. Not only that, but she is almost entirely without guidance when it comes to choosing the most nutritious food for her family. Her doctor, unless he's one of the rare ones who have studied nutrition, knows little about it. It wouldn't help to model her meals on the menus planned by most institutions, like schools and hospitals, because these are high in refined and denatured foods. So when she is

plagued by doubts that her family is not getting the proper food, she tends to cling to the fallacy that she can make up for their nutritional deficiencies by pouring gallons of orange juice and milk into her children and feeding them vitamins. These widely held misconceptions should be examined.

Let's begin with the gallons of orange juice fallacy. Of course, oranges are an excellent source of vitamin C, but so are all citrus fruits, most other fruit, and tomatoes. One orange eaten whole, preferably with some of the skin, a half of grapefruit, or a tomato adequately fulfills the body's vitamin C requirement for the day. And if you've been squeezing your family's orange juice the night before, remember that only orange juice that is drunk immediately after squeezing is high in vitamin content. The longer it is left standing, even refrigerated and covered, the more of its potency is lost. Fresh juice is preferable to canned and frozen juices, which are depleted of their natural vitamins and augmented by artificial vitamin C.

There are many conflicting theories about milk. Most nutritionists hail the virtues of cow's milk as the ideal food for human beings, yet many children and adults are allergic to it and find it difficult to digest. In most countries of the world, milk drinking is kept to a minimum and goat's milk is considered superior to cow's milk. Others believe that only mother's milk is the proper nourishment for babies. They say only infants should drink milk and the cow's milk was meant for its calf. Take the ancient Greeks who prided themselves on their healthy bodies. They did not drink milk but gave it to their animals.

This does not mean that milk is no good. It is an excellent food, high in protein, minerals, and vitamins and easily digestible for the average person. But the same food values are contained in all dairy products. Nor does milk compen-

sate for other vital foods lacking in the diet or for the damage done by too many of the wrong kinds of food. Also, most people don't realize that our milk is extremely high in fat content. It compares to the light cream in other countries, while our skim milk is comparable to their regular milk. Anyone with a weight problem, even a small child, should drink skim milk, for it contains the same nutrients, without the added fat content of regular milk.

Finally we come to vitamins. As a whole, we create our own deficiencies by eating the wrong food, then take artificial vitamins in an effort to alleviate these self-made vitamin deficiencies. Artificial vitamins do have a purpose. There are times when the body is depleted of vitamins, during or after an illness, during pregnancy and during a metabolic change. Moreover, when fresh foods are not available, artificial vitamins should be taken. But they are chemicals, man-made in a laboratory, and can never substitute for the natural vitamins contained in all natural foods. The vitamin user is led to believe that if a certain amount of vitamins provides health, ten times that amount provides super health. High potency is a great selling point in vitamins, but great quantities of vitamins can be harmful. There is danger in developing a deficiency in one nutrient while concentrating on another. Overdoses of any one vitamin can lead to serious complications, as was shown with the massive doses of vitamin D that have been found hazardous to health.

In addition to heavy and denatured foods, the Yogi also avoids stimulants such as alcohol, coffee, and tea. By shocking the nervous system, these beverages, and also refined sugar, give you a false feeling of energy that soon ebbs away. It is very easy to become addicted to any of these stimulants until the individual feels he cannot function without it. I am not referring only to excess amounts of

alcohol. There are many people who cannot drag themselves out of bed in the morning without first having a cup of coffee, and throughout the day they require frequent refuelings of coffee to keep them going. The side effects of all this caffeine are often insomnia, heartburn, and what has been succinctly termed coffee nerves. As you continue in Yoga, your supply of vitality will increase, and your body will not require these stimulants.

On the other hand, the Yogi does not take a moral stand against coffee, tea, or alcohol. There are Yogis who drink coffee, tea, and wine in moderation. It cannot be denied that there is caffeine contained in coffee, tannic acid in tea and alcohol in wine, but *moderation* is the key word pertaining to common sense imbibing. Here are some facts about coffee: Instant and concentrated coffee is subjected to chemical processing and contains harmful additives. Boiled or percolated coffee, especially when left standing, is subjected to the full amount of injurious oils in the coffee bean. Ideally, coffee should be prepared with a filter which absorbs the largest amount of residue and noxious matter and results in almost pure coffee. Coffee taken black and unsweetened is a food in itself and much less toxic to the system in its undiluted state. Coffee with cream or condensed milk is considered the most harmful combination to the system and the complexion, coffee with milk milder, and black coffee preferable. Depending on whether you enjoy a good cup of coffee, as I do, or else are a lover of tea, I leave it to your good judgment to decide what is best for you.

CHAPTER XII

YOGA AND EVERYDAY EATING FOR SLIMNESS

In our minds we have come to separate eating for health from eating for pleasure. We tend to turn the first into a burden and the second into a guilt. But through Yoga and common sense the two can be combined and include eating for slimness as well.

Yoga has always maintained that the slender body is the healthiest body. Today everyone realizes that obesity at any age is a health hazard. It used to be that children had to be fat to be considered healthy. I can still remember the ecstatic cries of appreciation from my relatives and parents' friends at the roly-poly sight of me as a child and those mortifying pinches on my fat cheeks. Now even the overly fat baby is put on a diet, because an overweight child is

more susceptible to sickness than one of normal weight. The modern mother is warned not to gain excessive weight during pregnancy or stuff her baby up to the brim, reassured by the pediatrician that it won't die of starvation if it skips a meal. For the middle aged, obesity is a health risk—and not only in insurance company jargon. In addition to being a health problem, overweight is also a social problem for the teen-ager who is treated like an outcast by his peers, for the unmarried who has difficulty finding a spouse, for the working person in his job. For example, in New York State a schoolteacher or nurse above a prescribed weight cannot be licensed. The myth of the jolly fat person is fast vanishing. Everyone knows it's no fun to be fat.

On the other hand, don't judge your weight by those charts that state what you should weigh at a certain height without taking into account individual body structure. One person may be slim at 135 pounds; another, at the same height, may be fat. The weight that looks well on one may be unattractive on another. As long as you are firm of flesh, light on your feet, with good health, energy, and stamina, you certainly should not feel like a criminal because statistics label you overweight.

Resist, too, the present popular notion that only the skinny can be attractive and chic. Just as unhealthy as obesity is the other extreme, the trend today toward extreme thinness which becomes an obsession with some women. Regarding any feminine roundness as excess weight, they frantically try to emulate the gaunt-looking models in the high fashion magazines. While the woman with sunken cheeks and a spindly body may be a photogenic mannequin on the printed page, in person she resembles a victim of prolonged starvation—which she probably is. Going along with the prevailing idea that bony means pretty, many young girls with trim, neat figures

abandon good sense in an effort to make their body measurements coincide with the spare proportions of their favorite female idols.

Eager to quickly shed unwanted pounds, many people latch on to whatever reducing plan is the current fad. Many of these can be as potentially damaging to health as overeating is. Some fad diets have caused illness, even death, and those accompanied by diet pills have led to serious nervous disorders. The medical profession has issued a warning against the so-called fat doctors who prescribe a variety of reducing drugs, sometimes even indiscriminately over a loudspeaker because they are too busy to see the patient individually.

All fad diets work, because one can lose weight on any monotonous eating routine, whether it's bananas and milk, grapefruit and eggs, all fat foods, all proteins, or steak and wine. They will all produce a weight loss, but the catch is that its effects last for only a short time. As soon as the person returns to his usual eating habits, which is inevitable, the weight reappears, and usually more of it. No pill or extreme diet produces permanent results, because all unhealthful and unnatural forms of eating are rejected by our mental and physical systems in the long run.

All disciplinary eating regimens, such as eating strictly for health or strictly for slimness, lead to frustration if they fail to please the palate. There are some people who are totally disinterested in what they eat and some who are gluttons concerned only with the quantity of food, but the majority of people have strong taste preferences, usually formed in childhood and influenced by advertising. Most people love manufactured sweets and heavy and spicy foods. When they're deprived of these foods, either for reasons of health or weight, they suffer, vocally or silently. Have you ever noticed the martyred expression on the face

of a dieter who has just refused a piece of cake? Feeling better physically or wearing a size 10 dress never truly compensates for the loss of eating enjoyment. What commonly happens is that the dieter's feeling of self-pity becomes so overwhelming he reverts to his old eating habits.

There is, however, a direct approach to a slender figure and good health. It is to develop new tastes in food in order to be able to substitute delicious nonfattening, nutritious food for delicious fattening, unhealthful food. It is quite impossible to learn to enjoy a steady diet of such dull foods as melba toast and plain lettuce leaves, but you can learn to prefer an attractive salad to spaghetti or a delicious piece of fruit to cake. You must, of course, forget your food prejudices and keep an open mind. If you say, "I don't like fish" or "But I hate vegetables," it won't work. If you give yourself a chance, you can develop a taste for the foods that are actually best for you.

The only effective reducing plan I know of for someone who has to lose a lot of weight, say fifty or a hundred pounds, is offered by the diet clubs which in recent years have sprung up all over the country. They have various names but follow the basic principles of Alcoholics Anonymous. The clubs have centers where people meet—men, women, or children who are all in the same overweight boat and frankly discuss their individual problems which become easier to handle as mutual problems. The idea is to lose weight through eating rather than starvation, to fill up on low calorie food so there is little craving for high calorie food. Medicines to stimulate weight loss are taboo. The members follow the simple common sense diet published by the Department of Health. The diet may not be ideal from the Yogic point of view, but it is certainly much healthier than all fad diets. It is a reducing plan that can keep the pounds off. After the initial weight loss, the new

style of eating can be maintained because it is satisfying and appealing.

All her life my mother claimed she had heavy bones and therefore couldn't lose weight. At my urging, she joined one of these diet clubs and, heavy bones to the contrary, took off thirty pounds. That was five years ago, but she has kept it off. After her initial weight loss, she was less strict with herself, but her new eating habits prevail. At seventy plus, she looks and feels great.

Once you have accustomed your body to a proper diet, it will prefer the light nutritional foods and you will find it no problem rejecting other kinds of food. Through the Yoga exercises and principles of nutrition, you are re-educating your body to know what is best for you. Most people, especially those over forty, are ten or fifteen pounds overweight. When you do the Yoga exercises your body will start complaining about this excess baggage, for these few extra pounds will interfere with the execution of the exercises. With the combination of physical activity and a change in eating habits, it will not be difficult to lose that weight.

Keep in mind that drastic weight fluctuation is harmful to the system, especially in and past middle age. A sudden loss of weight is prone to cause sagging and wrinkling of your face and body. Weight loss should not exceed a pound a week. (This excludes the drastically overweight.) Ideally, it should come off two pounds a month. This is the only way it stays off and keeps you looking well.

Whenever someone speaks of a weight problem, it is immediately assumed the problem is overweight. But being underweight is also a problem. It is really more difficult to gain weight than to lose it. However, there is little compassion for the underweight. When they complain that nothing they eat adds pounds, they usually meet with an un-

sympathetic response like, "I should have your problems!" The solution is not for the underweight to stuff himself with sugars, starches, and fats, for an excess of these foods will do as much damage to an underweight person as to anyone else. The problem can usually be traced to metabolism and nerves. Performing the Yoga exercises will release tension and stimulate the glands, so the body can effectively utilize the food that is consumed. Supplied with the proper diet, the body will build itself up and maintain its correct weight.

Healthful eating, in the broadest sense of the term, is not only what you eat but how you eat. In addition to being a basic drive, eating should constitute one of our greatest pleasures. A meal should represent a break in our routine, an enjoyable interlude spent with family or friends or alone, and a treat to the senses. It should not be regarded as a mere necessity, a time to fill the stomach as you fill the gas tank of your car, a hurried affair to be got over as quickly as possible.

Some predict that one of the marvels the world of the future has in store for us is that all food will come in the form of pills. Presumably then breakfast, lunch, and dinner will be no more than three quick swallows. Certainly the trend seems to be moving in that direction, with all the instant and concentrated food crowding the supermarket shelves. We can do our bit to stall off this appalling prospect by personally reviving good eating and good eating habits.

Eating tuna fish out of the can may make you less hungry, but an appetizing looking salad will be more satisfying. In the average household the dining room, tablecloth, and good dishes are reserved strictly for company. I'm not suggesting that you use these every day, but do pay more attention to the surroundings of daily meals. Even a kitchen table can be set attractively with place mats and nice dishes. Any picture is enhanced by an attractive frame, and the

simplest food will be more appetizing when served attractively.

Take time for meals. Granted, this is a tall order to fill for the harassed housewife with babies clinging all over her, but one that will benefit her and her family more than she realizes. Set aside time for a leisurely dinner, either alone with your husband or with him and the older children. Try to choose a time that is convenient for all, and insist they be on time. This can be one of the most enjoyable times of the day for everyone, not just an annoying interruption to a television program. The mother, to whom dinnertime can come to be only a burdensome chore of preparing, serving, and cleaning up afterwards, should try to relax as well and enjoy her food and family. Difficult as that may seem, consider it a necessity to help fight the increasing tensions that we are all subjected to.

One of the gospels of Yoga is that to masticate properly is the answer to most digestive troubles. The healthy stomach of the normal person can cope with almost any food if it is thoroughly chewed. On the other hand, even the most nutritional food that is not completely chewed often cannot be effectively used by the body. The digestive process begins in the mouth, where the digestive juices go to work breaking down the food so it can be absorbed by the body as nourishment. If the food particles are too large they cannot be easily digested and may pass out the large intestine without having been utilized by the body.

Thorough chewing is also a great weapon against obesity. Those who chew slowly can truly taste and enjoy the food that they are eating at present, instead of finishing quickly and craving the next course. Just as good wine should be sipped and savored, each morsel of food should be savored. When this is donè, the stomach will be satisfied before it is satiated and will let you know when it has had enough.

Chewing is also healthy exercise for the gums and teeth. Carrots and bread crusts should be given to children to chew on instead of chewing gum, which should be eliminated because of its harmful effects on teeth.

Another Yoga principle that makes very good sense is to eat only when you are hungry. Some people can go all day without food and require only one large meal. Others must eat more often in smaller quantity. Eat as your stomach, not the clock, commands. It is good and natural to feel hunger. A healthy appetite is not the capacity to devour great quantities of food, but the ability to enjoy food when one is hungry.

There is no reason to stick to a three-meals-a-day routine if you feel more comfortable eating only two. It was the custom of the health-conscious ancient Greeks to eat just two meals. Many families have got into the Sunday brunch habit, combining breakfast and lunch around eleven or twelve and then having a light dinner in the evening. They find the two meals quite adequate for the day.

Eating a large meal at noon and a light meal in the evening is healthier than eating the large meal at the end of the day. However, since this is not feasible for most people because of their work schedule, it is best to eat as early as possible to avoid going to bed with a full stomach, a common cause of indigestion, constipation, and overweight.

Avoid eating when you are tense and over-tired. At these times when the whole organism is affected adversely, food taken in is apt to do more harm than good.

There are certain foods that should not be combined. Mixtures of starch and fat, such as bread and butter, or protein and starch, such as meat and potatoes, are bad nutritional combinations. Injudicious mixing of foods often results in gas pains, heartburn, and other digestive distress.

Yoga advises that as one grows older, especially after

thirty-five, he should eat less to maintain perfect health. It stands to reason that the body that is no longer growing but only carrying on maintenance and repair work does not need so much food. Also, most people as they get older lead less physically active lives and do not burn up so many calories as they did when they were younger. The surplus turns into a burden of fat for the body to carry around.

The same advice about overeating holds true for overdrinking. Water is the most healthful drink of all, but the generally accepted rule about drinking eight glasses of water a day is without foundation. Unless you are under doctor's orders to drink a prescribed amount of water daily, you should let your own body prescribe the amount of water best for you. Drink when you are thirsty, not to fulfill some arbitrary quota. Plain tap water is fine; well water is better. If you are not fortunate enough to be supplied with it in your area, make an effort to buy it bottled. It does not cost very much.

The habit of drinking iced water or any iced beverage is an unhealthy one. Ice produces a shock when it comes in contact with the skin. Imagine then what a jolt it can cause to your internal digestive and nervous systems.

Generally speaking, it is not a good idea to drink with meals. Drinking while eating tends to result in overeating and washing food down instead of thoroughly chewing it. However, once you have established your suitable weight, you could adopt the good habit of having a glass of dry wine with dinner. It adds a festive touch to any meal and is low in calories. Since it is sipped, not poured down, it is an aid to digestion. A glass of good wine before supper can also take the place of a high calorie cocktail.

Raw juices are a wonderful health booster. Their benefits present actually a science in itself, one that could prove valuable to your health and that of your family. It is a

time-consuming process to prepare and squeeze vegetables and fruits, and most of their juices have to be drunk immediately for maximum food value. Also a vegetable juicer is an expensive product. On the other hand, let me assure those who feel they must supplement their diets with artificial vitamins that a juicer is cheaper in the long run and a superior investment, both monetarily and healthwise. Freshly squeezed vegetable and fruit juices are of great therapeutic value to sufferers from many chronic ailments. In their concentrated form, raw juices are the most regenerating food for building and maintaining good health. Carrot juice, especially, one of the richest sources of vitamin A, is frequently called a miracle juice for the cure and prevention of numerous ailments. Regular drinking of carrot juice can stop chronic colds and help curb chronic kidney and bladder diseases and strengthen the eyes. All over Israel, for instance, there are juice stands where freshly squeezed carrot juice is sold. The high nutritional standard of the Israelis is one of their greatest weapons. I personally like the combination of carrot, celery, and apple juices, with a generous squeeze of lemon, three or four times a week—a large glass.

The enthusiasm for raw juices shouldn't be carried to extremes, however. I know someone who drank carrot juice to the exclusion of everything else and became a victim of carotene poisoning.

Yoga recommends periodic fasts to cleanse the body and rest the digestive organs, which are constantly working. You should especially make it a point to fast during sickness. You will note that animals do not eat when they are sick. This is nature's safeguard while the body is working to regain health. During your fast you may drink water, water with lemon, vegetable juice, or vegetable broth when you get hungry. You may feel hungry at first, but your hun-

ger pangs will subside. If you can, go through the night without eating, but if you are too uncomfortable by evening, eat a light meal –a vegetable, baked patato, and beverage, unsweetened and without milk. For those with digestive trouble, an enema the night before fasting is usually advised.

Before going into some particulars of sensible, healthy everyday diets, I'd like to direct a few words to the housewife who is in charge of it all. The responsibility of your family's nutrition is yours. It is up to you to decide which foods are good and which are not. Don't throw your family into a panic by suddenly depriving them of all the foods they are used to, but gradually substitute good food for bad food. Buy the best food in season and prepare it attractively.

Most people are biased in their opinion that simple, natural cooking and eating is dull. Nothing is further from the truth. By nature and avocation I am a gourmet who loves good food and loves to cook. I can spend hours browsing in gourmet shops. I find some of my most exciting reading in cookbooks and can turn out a hollandaise sauce or a soufflé with the best of them, but I seldom do, for I have completely changed my style of cooking. Whereas I used to prepare food in the heavily sauced continental manner, I now cook with regard to naturalness, lightness, and healthfulness but with no less attention to taste and flavor.

By using herbs and exotic spices, you'll discover a whole new world of flavor without having to add butter and cream to enhance the natural taste of food. Try any of these: dill, parsley, chervil, chives, sage, marjoram, caraway seeds, thyme, paprika, garlic, onions, leeks, rosemary, oregano, cumin seed or powder, turmeric, and curry in moderation. For extra flavoring, try the concentrated seasoning cubes available in health food stores.

A word about cooking methods. Food should be boiled, broiled, or baked. Although no food should be deep fried,

occasionally it may be sautéed, which means fried lightly, preferably in the specially coated pans that require very little shortening. Use vegetable oil or a little butter for cooking. While margarine may be slightly lower in cholesterol, it is a synthetic food.

The number one rule to remember when preparing vegetables is never overcook. Either steam or pressurize them, or use a pot with a heavy bottom. Barely cover the vegetables with water, bring them quickly to a boil, lower the flame, and simmer carefully only until tender. You can reserve the cooking water for soup base.

Following the menu suggestions are some recipes that the Yoga student could use for tasty and healthy eating, with special consideration for weight watchers. Bear in mind that these menus mention only a few of the possibilities available. They're not intended as a complete list but only to spark your imagination.

Breakfast

Right now, first thing in the morning, is the time to begin relying on the judgment of your own body and mind, instead of what "people tell you." Forget that you "must" have a big breakfast. You must never eat when you're not hungry or force your children to do so. Some people enjoy a hearty meal early in the morning; others shudder at the thought of it. If you don't feel like having breakfast, drink a glass of water or some other beverage, or have a piece of fruit.

If you are hungry, there is a large variety of food to choose from. If you want juice, make it freshly squeezed, or as an alternative, you can use the juice that comes in glass jars without sugar or sweetener added. Any fresh fruit is preferable: orange, grapefruit, bananas or apples in the winter and melons, berries, or peaches in the summer—to name but a few.

For cold cereal, find a whole wheat, unsweetened one and avoid the boxes which list mysterious abbreviations that may stand for harmful chemicals. Eat it with skim milk, cut up fruit, or sweetened with honey. Add a generous tablespoon of wheat germ. Be on the lookout for imported packaged cereals that contain wheat germ, wheat and millet flakes, organically grown fruit, and no storage preservatives. For hot cereal stick to oatmeal with skim milk, honey, fruit, and wheat germ, or if you have no weight problem, cream of wheat.

You could make some pancakes from wheat flour, of course. Or have an egg once in a while—one. Limit your intake of eggs to four to six per week. With it have a slice of bread or toast, whole wheat or rye, but not with butter or margarine. Try cottage cheese on your bread or honey or apple butter to satisfy that craving for something sweet.

Have your beverage.

Lunch

If you ate a large breakfast, go easy on lunch. If you can skip it, do so by all means, but never at the expense of being ravenous by suppertime. If you have to eat twice as much at dinner because you've gone without lunch, you are doubly defeating your purpose. Maybe you can get by comfortably on just a snack. Try yogurt. It can be easily taken and eaten anywhere. It would be best to eat it plain or with honey, but if you like it with the preserves added to commercial yogurt, don't worry too much about those relatively few calories. If you have the time and initiative, you can make your own yogurt, which is superior to the store-bought varieties. Yogurt is sometimes regarded almost as some sort of magic elixir. It is not; it is simply a fine food because it is nutritious, filling, easily digestible, and low in calories.

Cottage cheese is another food you should get acquainted

with. Living in a competitive country, you have many brands from which to choose, some tastier than others. Farmers cheese, pot cheese and ricotta are also excellent foods, filling and easy to digest. Spices and herbs can be added for extra flavor. Next come the hard cheeses such as Swiss or American, but keep away from the rich, soft, fermented or heavily spiced cheeses.

Try to limit your daily intake of bread to two slices. If you had bread for breakfast, omit the usual sandwich. Lunch does become somewhat of a problem for the worker or schoolchild who has to bring his lunch, but with ingenuity an alternative to the sandwich can be found: a cold piece of chicken or fish with raw vegetables or a fresh fruit or cottage cheese salad with wheat crackers. If you must have a sandwich, make a sincere effort to get away from sausage, ham, and all meat. Also, go easy on canned fish. Eliminate mayonnaise, catsup, and prepared mustard, three unhealthy condiments. You could eat your single egg for lunch, hard-boiled, with lettuce and tomato in a sandwich. Another choice would be some kind of cheese sandwich, even cream cheese, unless you are overweight. The same goes for peanut butter, which is an excellent food when not accompanied by the standard jelly and white bread. Even the weight watchers should try an avocado sandwich. The avocado contains almost every nutrient needed by the system. One could exclusively live on avocados and enjoy excellent health.

Have a beverage *after* the meal.

Supper or Dinner

It is a good idea, especially for the weight watcher, to have a beverage a half hour before dinner: fresh vegetable juice, vegetable broth, or skim milk. Any of these will diminish your initial hunger and enable you to start dinner leisurely instead of greedily.

Start dinner with fresh fruit, such as grapefruit or melon. They are your best dietetic friends, low in calories.

Or begin dinner with soup. As a labor of love, make your family homemade soup. Soup is not fattening unless you add butter and cream, an unnecessary embellishment to vegetable, pea, bean, or lentil soup.

Learn to substitute fish for meat. Many people don't like fish because they have not been educated toward it from childhood, but a taste for it can be developed. Find a good fish store with a reputation for fresh fish. No doubt you will be surprised at the variety of fish available besides the familiar old standards you're used to. Keep an open mind about trying new kinds. Your fish man can advise you what to buy and how to prepare it. He will also bone and fillet it for you.

All fish or seafood is high in vitamins and minerals and easily digestible. It can be broiled, baked, or sautéed.

The meats that are most overlooked in this country are the relatively inexpensive organ meats. The only one with some degree of popularity is liver, an excellent source of protein and abundant vitamins to be sure. But there are others equally good, healthy, and easy to digest: kidneys, brains, sweetbreads, tripe, and lungs.

Chicken, baked, broiled, or boiled, is not so valuable a food as fish or the organ meats, but is easily digestible and may be included in a good diet. Turkey and duck belong in the heavy food category.

Have a salad and one or two cooked vegetables with your fish or meat. Get acquainted with all the varieties of lettuce there are Boston, bibb, romaine, chicory, etc. Iceberg lettuce seems to be the most popular but is lowest in vitamin content. Anything green and fresh may be used in a salad, even those we usually cook, such as spinach, cabbage, and turnip greens. If you are in doubt as to whether to cook it,

don't. Cut, dice, or break it into a salad instead, along with tomatoes, radishes, cucumbers, red and green peppers, watercress, endive, and avocado. Red and white onions, scallions, parsley, and dill do wonders for a salad.

Use vegetable oil in your salads instead of olive oil. It is lighter and lower in calories and—combined with salt, pepper, and herbs—quite tasty. Your dressing can be made with oil and lemon, or if you like, you may use a little good quality vinegar instead of the lemon juice. Fresh lemon juice, by the way, should be used liberally on all raw and cooked food.

Most people get into a rut with vegetables, serving the same ones continually, never taking full advantage of the variety offered. Experiment with the herbs listed earlier in this chapter. They lend added interest to vegetables. To get back to those fresh string beans: cook them for seven minutes in a minimum amount of salted water, drain, and add a little butter, dill, and seasoning. You will never revert to the canned or frozen kind.

Potatoes and brown and unpolished rice are valuable foods and should not be neglected, even by the dieter. Remember not to combine them with fish or meat, but eat them at a separate meal. You may have a rice dish, a non-starchy vegetable and a salad or a baked potato the same way. And try cottage cheese and chives on baked potato next time. Rice or potato with yogurt is a nice combination, too.

Fruit is the best solution to the problem of desserts. Take advantage of fruits in season and eat as much as you like of them. A fresh fruit salad with honey, berries in season, fresh pineapple in winter are a few successful substitutes for gooey desserts. For those with no weight problem, there is custard or pudding, made with honey instead of sugar. There are also nuts and dried fruit, raisins, dates,

figs, apricots, apples, and plums, to appease a sweet tooth. They are excellent for children, too, for snacks instead of other sweets. The natural sugar they contain will produce natural energy without promoting tooth decay or aggravating disease. Yes, they're fattening, but not so much so as cake, cookies, and candy.

Have your beverage after your meal.

Here are some of my favorite recipes from all over the world. I haven't always given exact measurements for seasoning because I season according to my taste and advise you to do the same.

Accompanied by a salad, these two soup dishes are a meal by themselves.

FISH SOUP *(from Spain)*

2 pounds fish, cut into serving pieces (mackerel, bass, whitefish, bluefish, pike, etc.)
2 pounds seafood (mussels, clams, shrimp, crabs, scallops, etc.)
1 cup chopped onion
½ cup chopped Italian parsley
2 cups chopped tomatoes
1 clove garlic, minced
1 cup dry white wine
2 cups water
⅓ cup vegetable oil

Heat a large kettle, and add the oil. Sauté onion and garlic until light brown, then add the parsley and tomatoes. Season well with salt, freshly ground pepper, and oregano. Cook over medium flame for 10 minutes. Pour in water and wine and bring to a boil. Add the fish and seafood, except for the mussels and clams. Simmer for 20 minutes. Add mussels and clams, and simmer until they open. Add more water if needed.

CHICKEN IN THE POT *(International)*

3- to 4-pound chicken, quartered
2 pounds beef bones
2 onions
4 ribs celery
Few sprigs parsley
Thyme, if available
Seasoning cubes and salt, as desired
6 peeled carrots
Other vegetables suggested: small cabbage, quartered; small cauliflower, quartered; brussels sprouts; small potatoes.

In a large kettle cover all the ingredients except carrots and the other suggested vegetables with water. Season, and bring to a boil. Cover, and simmer for 45 minutes. Discard bones, onions, celery, and parsley. Add all the other vegetables. Cook for another 20 minutes or until everything is tender. Sprinkle with fresh parsley before serving.

Two party dips, not exactly without calories but not loaded with them either, and extremely nutritious. If you can find it, warm pitah, a flat Oriental bread, is very good eaten with these dips.

HUMUS *(Middle East)*

1-pound package chick-peas
1 teaspoon garlic juice or garlic powder
Juice of ½ lemon
½ cup vegetable oil
Salt, freshly ground pepper to taste
Finely chopped parsley

Soak chick-peas overnight. Discard water. Cover with fresh water, add a little salt, and cook until very soft, about

45 minutes. Drain, and mix peas and other ingredients into a smooth paste in an electric blender Add more oil or a little water, if needed. Serve cold, sprinkled with parsley.

GUACAMOLE *(Mexican)*

1 large, very ripe avocado
Juice of 1 lemon
Salt, pepper, garlic, Worcestershire sauce to taste
1 small onion, grated
½ cup combined cream cheese and sour cream or, for weight watchers, ½ cup cottage cheese and yogurt

Mash avocado with fork to a smooth consistency with no lumps. Add other ingredients and mix until creamy but not watery. Chill.

Helpful hint: Leave the avocado pit in the guacamole until serving time to prevent the mixture from turning dark.

SABRA SALAD *(Israel)*

1 avocado, cut into chunks
2 cucumbers, peeled and cut up
2 large tomatoes, cut up
1 green or red fresh pepper, cut up
Bunch of radishes, sliced
Bunch of scallions (use the green tops also), chopped
Vegetable oil, salt, and freshly ground pepper

Add all ingredients in a large bowl, mix, and chill well.

A Yogi friend who is the acclaimed gourmet in Yoga circles gave me these two Indian recipes. I do omit the potent chili peppers and chili and curry powders characteristic of Indian cooking.

RICE WITH NUTS AND RAISINS

1 cup Indian rice, washed well
½ cup natural pistachio or pine nuts
½ cup raisins
1 tablespoon butter or ghee (clarified butter)
4 cups water
Salt, turmeric, cumin seed, and mustard seed

Put rice, water, salt, nuts, and raisins in a pot. Bring to a boil, with the pot uncovered, and continue boiling for 15 minutes. Keep testing the rice with a fork for doneness. Roll one grain between your fingers to be sure it is perfectly cooked. Do not overcook. Drain the excess water from the rice with a colander. Melt the butter in the hot pot with the flame off, stir in the spices, and add the rice. Stir well and cover. Do not heat again.

EGGPLANT AND BANANAS

1 medium eggplant
2 ripe bananas, unpeeled and washed well
1 large tomato, chopped
1 large green or red pepper, chopped
½ cup vegetable oil
Salt, pepper, turmeric, cumin seed, and mustard seed

Bake eggplant in 350° oven for about 30 minutes. If the skin is tender, leave it on; if in doubt, peel off the skin. In a heavy casserole, heat the oil and add spices. Slice the bananas thickly and sauté for about 10 minutes. Add the tomatoes and pepper and cook for 10 more minutes. Cut the eggplant into chunks and add to the casserole. Stir lightly and cook another 5 minutes or until tender. Do not overcook.

In conclusion, don't think that you must renounce forever certain foods that you and your family consider delicious

because they don't come up to Yoga standards of eating. However, learn to reserve them for occasional treats. Don't feel guilty about having a good piece of chocolate, a rich cake, or a martini. Enjoy them once in a while, but not as a steady diet. As your tastes change to appreciate the vital natural foods, the rich foods will lose their appeal. You'll be eating healthier and enjoying it more.

CHAPTER XIII

YOGA AND YOU

If you're still wondering whether Yoga is what you are looking for, I say give it a try.

By now you've probably tried all the other physical exercise programs and entered into all of them with great enthusiasm. Perhaps you became a member of a health club, intrigued by all the gadgets that would firm and slim you effortlessly, or even invested in a mechanical exercising gadget of your own. Or if you were more energetic, you attended calisthenics classes, exercised to television, followed the instructions of various books, or jogged along faithfully in rain or shine, oblivious to curious stares and adept at hedging traffic. You pursued these activities faithfully, and they did you a world of good. You felt better,

looked better, and became trimmer and firmer. But that inevitable day came when your enthusiasm began to ebb, then disappeared completely. You just couldn't stand the thought of another push-up, isometric, or ride on the exercycle, and you stopped. If you think your case is unique, be assured it's not. Just glance through the classified ads in the Sunday newspaper offering used gym equipment for sale, sometimes to be had for the hauling.

Don't berate yourself for lack of willpower, for most physical self-improvement plans are doomed to failure. No one is going to voluntarily keep doing something he doesn't like. Furthermore, when you have to force yourself to do something because it may be good for you, you are defeating your purpose, because the tensions you bring to a task you dislike are harmful to your body. Like the steady diet of lettuce leaves and melba toast mentioned earlier, a steady diet of these kinds of physical exercises is just no fun. Hatha Yoga is different. That is why Yoga is superior to other forms of exercise. For the moment I'm not even considering its added advantages of breathing techniques and mental benefits. Yoga will do you more good and you'll want to practice, because Yoga is *fun* to do.

You will look forward to exercising, and once you have established it as part of your routine, you won't want to give it up. If you should skip the exercises, your body will let you know that it is missing something vital to its well-being. Yoga will become part of you, giving you lasting benefits all your life.

Today doctors are urging a sedentary public to get up out of their chairs and exercise as part of their daily routine. Many people make the mistake of thinking that sports are the answer to physical exercise. The sports Americans participate in can't be considered part of this prescribed exercise, for sports are really more of a diversion for leisure

time and cannot provide you with overall physical fitness. Sports are fun and good for figure, health, and morale, but there is no one sport that conditions your whole body. The professional athletes who are in superb physical condition are the ones who work out daily in a gym. Those who don't are usually in pretty bad shape, prone to backaches, muscular aches, pulls, and sprains. This is because in their particular skill they concentrate on developing only certain parts of their anatomy and subject those to constant stress. Many people who indulge in one sport consistently while ignoring the body structure as a whole can severely damage themselves. For example, tennis and horseback riding demand extreme forward movement of the muscles. Unless the muscles are also worked in the reverse direction, the body is subject to charley horse, extreme stiffness, and muscular strain and tension. I have worked with many tennis players and riders who found that Yoga alleviated these symptoms and conditioned their bodies to withstand the specific stresses of these sports. The Sunday golfer, too, is fooling himself if he believes that his eighteen holes are a decisive factor in maintaining good health. The walk around the golf course is beneficial, but other than that the only effect golf has on the body is to produce some degree of muscularity in the arms. There is no sport that can compare with Yoga's effectiveness in producing overall physical benefits. Yoga exercises every area of the body, stretching muscles and ligaments in all directions.

Moreover, Yoga can help you do better in any sport. Skiers can improve their coordination, skaters their balance, swimmers their breath control, tennis players their endurance and grip. Skaters and skiers will find Yoga training decreases their chances of getting hurt when they fall, because they will learn to have better control of their bodies. The champion French Olympic ski team used Yoga

as part of its training. Anyone who takes up boxing, wrestling, karate, or judo will certainly benefit by developing powerful abdominal muscles through Yoga. Two of my recent students are surfers, members of a dedicated group who take their sport very seriously. They tell me that Yoga has become popular with surfers on the West Coast because it improves their balance and coordination. They are also discovering that Yoga improves their entire physical condition, because in surfing the back muscles are strained and tense to the point of stiffness and inflexibility. All sports depend on coordination, balance, breath control, endurance, and a sense of physical confidence, the very qualities that Yoga develops, so it only stands to reason that Yoga can help you become a better athlete.

Yoga does require self-discipline. I purposely use the term self-discipline instead of willpower because willpower implies forcing yourself to do something against your nature, whereas self-discipline is a guide to fulfilling an obligation to yourself. The benefits that Yoga offers are attractive, but you have to work to achieve them. In the beginning, you'll have to give yourself the little push to set aside the time to practice when you think you're too tired and to keep at it. After a short time the momentum of Yoga will take over and you'll find you won't need to give yourself that push, for Yoga will have become a part of you.

Don't confuse push with rush. Don't start Yoga with the idea of how much you can accomplish in the shortest span of time. The eager beaver who wants to learn everything immediately and throws himself into a frenzy of practice in the beginning never sticks with Yoga very long—or, for that matter, anything he begins, but is forever rushing into something new.

There are other don'ts to remember in Yoga. Don't become impatient with your body if at first it seems resistant

to your wishes. The back that won't straighten or the knees that won't bend will respond sooner to gentle prodding than to brute force. Your body will learn to assume the position, but it is a gradual process. The stiffness has been acquired over years. You'll regain resiliency, and it won't take years. In fact, it will take a relatively short time, but it can't be accomplished overnight. You could hurt yourself if your impatience forces your body into a position it's not yet ready to assume.

Don't set your goals too high, especially in the beginning. Don't aim for acrobatic feats that others may be executing with what appears to be effortless ease. While you should be aware of your present capacity, you should not make up your mind that a certain pose is impossible. Concentrate on perfecting each pose to the best of your ability. When one of my students tells me: "I can't do this now, but someday I will," he has grasped the meaning of Yoga and is well on his way to success.

No one is born to success. Anything worth achieving requires diligence and very often purely mechanical practice. A person may be born with a natural talent for singing, dancing, or painting, but unless he works to develop that talent, it will amount to nothing. The daily repetition of scales, pliés, or brush strokes are necessary to make a great artist, and it is consistency that brings the desired results. The same is true for Yoga. You will find Yoga practice quite rewarding, because your body will respond quickly.

For the best results in Yoga, find a teacher. It is possible to learn Yoga by the book just as it's possible to become a lawyer by a correspondence course, but it's not the best way. In classic Yoga literature, it is advised that you seek a Guru of infinite wisdom, at whose lotus feet you should worship, one who will be your mother, father, and master, and who will lead you to physical and mental perfection.

Although there are those dissatisfied persons desperately seeking all over the world to follow such a Guru, I would advise you not to expect all that from any teacher. A good teacher can become a friend to turn to for advice, but certainly shouldn't be worshiped.

Look for an instructor with a pleasing voice, an even temperament, and a genuine interest in people. The more accomplished in Yoga the teacher is, the better, but he does not necessarily have to master the more intricate positions of Yoga to be a good teacher. However, he should definitely be able to perform all the basic and classical Yoga poses and have perfected all the breathing techniques in order to teach them properly.

Try to make sure you select someone who teaches Yoga for the individual and not Yoga for the sake of Yoga. Yoga is a personalized type of exercise, each person in a class going along at his own speed to the best of his ability. For you to get the most out of the class, you must have a teacher who can focus on the individual, giving encouragement and help when it's needed.

The ultimate test of a good teacher can only be measured in how well you learn to do the exercises, provided, of course, that you do your share of practicing. Unless you have a physical handicap, you will be able to master most of the Yoga positions. The students illustrated in this book doing the exercises are not exceptions. Most students in my classes can do all the exercises listed within six months. Except for those with special problems, all my students can execute the Intermediate Headstand within three months—an accomplishment always accompanied by a great feeling of exultation.

You may not always find the teacher who is tuned in on precisely your wave length, but you can learn from him just the same. Do try to avoid the type so enamored with his

own body that he spends most of the class time posing in various positions to show himself to his best advantage. While his prowess may impress you, you won't learn much from him.

Empathy is an important quality in a Yoga instructor, too. He should really understand the capacity and limitations of his students. I once had a young instructor, possessed with boundless energy, who worked his beginners' class of middle-agers into a state of complete exhaustion. Beware and be prepared to exercise your own sense with the teacher who urges you to try difficult advanced positions before you are ready for them. In one beginners' class I attended, the instructor effortlessly assumed the Crow position and told us to try it. What I, and most of the other students, didn't know then was that the Crow is one of the very advanced positions which should be taught only to experienced students with highly developed coordination. Most of us went into the Crow and fell flat on our knees on the concrete floor. To sum up: Follow a teacher, but never blindly.

There are some teachers who give private lessons, but these are generally expensive. While they should be sought by the person suffering with a very specific physical problem, group lessons are preferable for the majority. A class should contain no more students than the teacher can supervise and work with individually. Group lessons are enjoyable, but if they are given in enormous groups it can become quite frustrating, especially when one has to strain to see what the teacher is demonstrating.

It is more fun to share your interest in Yoga with others. I know one elderly lady who not only practices Yoga faithfully but has added new interest to her life and made new friends by attending Yoga lectures, meetings, and other activities that are available in New York City.

Today Yoga is taught in most large cities in the United States. Check the yellow pages for Yoga centers or with your local Y. There are also churches and synagogues that sponsor Yoga classes and schools that feature them as part of their adult education program. And you could go to a Yoga retreat or resort on your vacation.

If there is no Yoga class available where you live, take the initiative and organize one. Any of the above mentioned institutions would probably be glad to sponsor a class if they were made aware of the interest in Yoga and its benefits. You could find a teacher through the nearest Yoga center or retreat.

There are many health clubs and resort hotels that because of popular request combine Yoga with their regular programs of calisthenics and machine exercises. But Yoga done haphazardly, either as part of other exercises or on an unscheduled basis, has little purpose or meaning.

To be of noticeable benefit Yoga must be taught as a course, preferably once a week for six to eight weeks. Having a Yoga instructor come for a one-time session to demonstrate some positions for you and your friends may be diverting but not beneficial. Ideally, there should be beginning, intermediate, and advanced courses so you can continue to firmly establish Yoga as part of your life.

Whether you're attending a class at the Y, the Unitarian Church Community House, or your neighbor's basement, be prepared to pay at least a nominal fee. There are some Yoga societies that maintain it is unspiritual to teach Yoga for money. They exist on contributions, and their teachers are not paid. However, human nature being what it is, people tend to value most that which they pay for, whether it be advice or Yoga lessons. People will not attend with the same regularity or put the same amount of effort into free

lessons as they will into lessons that have been paid for—in advance. When lessons are paid for on a pay as you go plan, it is too easy to become lazy or discouraged and give up before you have begun to experience the benefits of Yoga. The majority of my students that stick with their first course continue in the ensuing courses. The sad thing is that the ones who do drop out of the first course are the very ones who would benefit the most. The overweight, over-nervous, most uncoordinated and inflexible give the excuse, "Yoga may be for some, but not for me." It is, however, for everyone who gives it and himself a chance.

Having read this far, you understand that it isn't necessary to deprive yourself of your everyday pleasures in order to practice Yoga. Yoga demands no martyrs. But although you won't be required to give up what you now consider your fun, as you seriously practice Yoga your ideas of fun may change. Everywhere people are engaged in a feverish pursuit of fun, constantly seeking excitement and stimulation in purposeless activity, drugs, alcohol, and sex. "The world is a hopeless mess, and we're all doomed. Accept the futility and rottenness of life, and get your kicks where you can," they say. After a while all the thrills begin to pall, but the dissatisfaction remains. External stimulation may provide momentary diversion, but the genuine source of all pleasure comes from within. So even if Yoga offered nothing more, it would be valuable because it can help you to discover yourself. It can lead you to the sources of inner strength and serenity. Satisfaction with yourself can enable you to derive real pleasure from whatever you do, your work, your play, your relationships with other people. The experience of Yoga is a pleasure in itself, but it will also open new doors to pleasures in other phases of your life.

You will probably find that your intellectual powers have

increased and you will derive new enjoyment from stimulating your mind. Your capacity to absorb complex subjects like philosophy and science may increase.

You may eliminate certain habits and tastes that are incompatible with Yoga, like smoking and drinking hard liquor. Others you may modify. I used to be an inveterate bridge player, but now I find the tension that accompanies most bridge games and the relaxation of Yoga just don't mix. I still play an occasional game of bridge but only with a partner who, like me, plays for pleasure, not blood.

Through Yoga you can experience a subtle change in your character, more patience, understanding, and honesty toward others and yourself. Yoga can help foster self-confidence and a more mature attitude. Those who feel secure in their own worth as human beings do not have to frantically race to keep up with the Joneses financially or socially.

In the subtle way that Yoga works to change your outlook on life, it can help you to better appreciate your family, the friends who are true friends, and most importantly your own company. Many people are alone, but no one needs to be lonely. Solitude is not loneliness. Loneliness is a state of dissatisfaction even in the midst of people. Yoga can become a friend and a companion to the alone and to the lonely. None experience greater loneliness than the blind. Sally is completely blind and lives alone except for her Seeing Eye dog, Tommy. They both come to class. While Sally does the exercises, Tommy observes the class and, during relaxation, falls asleep. Eyes are not necessary for meditation, and Sally was able to grasp the vision within by concentrating on the third eye. She learned to "see," not externally but internally. Yoga can help everyone to see the internal vision, so necessary in times of loneliness and despair.

Certainly no one can ignore the troubled times we live in. Every morning's newspapers bring fresh accounts of wars, riots, and social miseries. Our own sense of frustration is deepened because we personally are able to do little or nothing about these events largely beyond our control. Yoga can provide a refuge to help maintain our own equilibrium and levelheadedness in the midst of external turbulence. We turn inward to build our own strength and peace.

This does not mean that you use Yoga to cut yourself off from the world. Rather Yoga helps you fortify yourself so you can function efficiently and calmly in the midst of general and personal upheaval.

Just as nature has fashioned the individual with the potential for good health, so has she fashioned him with the potential for joy. Unhappiness and tragedy usually come uninvited, but happiness must be sought. Often a person must train himself to recognize joy when it is present, or else he will only realize it was there after it is gone. Through Yoga you can learn to feel happy *now*, not to dwell on the past or fill your time with worries and daydreams of the future, but to truly live only in the present.

You can find enjoyment in everyday of life with Yoga. It has been around for thousands of years, giving new life to those who take advantage of what it has to offer. I honestly believe it is the wave of the future. In spite of reversals, the world is moving forward and people are becoming more intelligent. Eventually, more and more people will come to choose Yoga as the most intelligent path to follow. Now discover Yoga yourself. It makes common sense.

EXERCISES

EXERCISES

Yoga and Practice

The following exercises are in actuality a complete Yoga course as I teach it in my class to my students. I have, however, listed just those exercises that are feasible to learn "by the book," omitting those in my repertoire that should be attempted only under professional supervision. Nevertheless, you have here a program of exercises which if followed correctly can give you the benefits of Yoga. Beginning on page 224 you will find a practice schedule to help you set up an everyday Yoga routine.

A few more words before you begin.

Do the exercises in the order that they are given here,

making the transition smoothly from one position to the next. Don't concentrate on those exercises dealing with your special problem, if you happen to have one. The overall benefit derived from doing all the exercises as a complete unit will affect the particular area of your concern. Also, don't shirk from giving your "bad side" a workout. One side of your body will respond easier than the other, but be conscientious about giving equal attention to both sides to even out your physical imbalance.

The Yogi singles out the early morning before sunrise and the early evening before sunset as the best times to practice. That may well be for the unencumbered practitioner whose time is his own to choose, but for the busy wage earner or active housewife the only best time to practice is the time most convenient for you. Just make sure that you wait at least two hours after eating to exercise. Never attempt Yoga, or for that matter any exercise, on a full stomach. Besides being unhealthy, it will detract from the enjoyment and benefit that should be yours in conditioning your body.

The best time is also any time you will not be disturbed. Make it a point to practice in private, without an audience, especially when you are beginning. Later as you become more proficient and confident, you can share your prowess with your family and friends. But remember Yoga loses much of its meaning if it's used merely to show off. No matter how proud you may be of your achievements don't use them as the means to impress others.

Some of you, I realize, have no private time to call your own during your waking hours. The thing to do is take some time from your sleeping hours; either getting up ahead of the family or staying up after everyone is asleep very often assures the most privacy. Nor will you miss that extra sleep

because of the increased vitality and stamina you'll possess after a short time of Yoga practice.

Whatever time of day or night you choose, try to stick to that particular period as far as possible. Establish Yoga practice as part of your daily routine as firmly as brushing your teeth is. Start off with ten minutes of practice, gradually increasing to half an hour. It is the consistency, not the length of time spent on performance, that will bring the desired results. Five minutes of practice every day is more effective than a half hour every other day or one hour three times a week. The days you won't feel like practicing are the times Yoga can help you most, so don't use tiredness as an excuse to skip your exercises. When you begin practicing, your fatigue will disappear and you'll feel refreshed. Also, don't tell yourself you're just not in the mood for Yoga because you're depressed, excited, or nervous. The breathing exercises will calm you, and as you continue, the other exercises will relax you and revive your drooping spirits.

Neither should you let "not feeling well" persuade you to neglect your exercises. Now's the time to give yourself a little push. Even after a few of the exercises, you'll feel much better than if you had followed your first impulse and flopped into bed. Omit the more strenuous exercises on the first day of menstruation, but you can exercise during your period.

However, use your common sense or seek professional advice when severe aches or pains persist. Never take a chance on possibly aggravating any serious symptoms. Never attempt Yoga if there is the slightest possibility of a fracture, sprain, or slipped disk. Sufferers from hypertension or acute sinus conditions should avoid the inverted positions such as the Shoulderstand or the Headstand. If you have a heart ailment, don't exercise without your doc-

tor's approval. There are some Yogis who use their knowledge to help people with heart conditions or other physical disorders, but no one should ever try to cure himself without an experienced Yoga teacher and even then never without first getting medical approval.

See to it that your practice area is well ventilated but with no drafts. It shouldn't be overheated or over air-conditioned. Exercise on a hard surface you can push against, not on a bed. Use a special mat on a bare floor or bath towel reserved only for Yoga practice on a carpet. Practicing in front of a full length mirror is helpful to check that you're performing the exercises correctly. As for practice clothing, the less the better. Certainly no restrictive garments should be worn. Exercising in leotards makes you feel very professional, and the slenderizing effect of black leotards is a tremendous boost to morale. But leotards don't have to be black. They come in a whole variety of becoming colors.

When you're just beginning, make sure furniture is out of the way. A miscarried Shoulderstand has been known to result in a broken lamp or bruised shin. Once you become adept at Yoga you'll need only a very small practice area and won't have to concern yourself with the fragility of your surroundings.

Most of you are beginning Yoga with a body that is out of condition. Therefore, regard your body as unused territory that will need patient cultivation. You will be setting to work joints, muscles, tendons, and ligaments that have long lain dormant. Be gentle, and don't expect the impossible—right away. You will have to condition your body slowly by stretching muscles and loosening joints that until now have had little or no exercise at all.

Eventually you will reach your goal of firmness and flexibility, but straining and jerking your body won't get you

there. Don't worry about reaching the ultimate position at the beginning. Your body will benefit from even the partial execution of a hold or exercise. Even when you think you're not getting anywhere your body is proving the opposite by stretching a little at a time. Provide your body with the incentive, and it will do the rest.

While you shouldn't strain, you should work to the utmost of your capacity. When you have reached a plateau in a position, that is, when you start to feel comfortable in a certain hold, go on to a more advanced stage of the exercise.

For example, in the Alternate Leg Stretch, when you can touch your head to your knee while grasping your calf, start trying to do it holding on to your ankle. Yoga should present a constant challenge to the body.

You will experience aches in various parts of your body until it becomes accustomed to being stretched, even when you attempt new positions after doing Yoga for some time. This is natural and will soon pass away.

When you practice your exercises focus all your attention on Yoga. Don't think about how you're going to pay the insurance premium, why your stock keeps going down, or what to serve at your dinner party Saturday night. Think only about Yoga, and let all your thoughts be graceful ones. Yoga demands the cooperation of a good imagination. You may not be moving with all the grace and poise of a sleek, shiny cat, but imagine that you are. Pretty soon you will be.

This will probably be one of the few times during your fast-paced day that you will not be rushing. And at first, slowing down won't come easy. Be conscious that each exercise should be done slowly. Go into it slowly, and, remember, come out of it just as slowly.

Be aware that you are working only for yourself in what may be the most beneficial undertaking in your life.

BREATHING EXERCISES

The mechanics of Yoga breathing are the complete opposite to our everyday breathing in which we suck in the stomach as we inhale and extend it as we exhale. In Yoga breathing we push out the abdomen as we breathe in, lowering the diaphragm and thereby providing the lungs with the maximum space for expansion. With all this room to expand, the lungs can completely inflate down to the very bottom like a balloon, something that rarely happens in routine breathing. An increased quantity of oxygen is carried to every inch of the lung and throughout the system.

When you first begin to practice Yoga breathing, concentrate especially on this aspect of it, making sure you extend the abdomen as you inhale and contract it as you exhale. A good way to check yourself is by lightly resting your fingertips on your stomach.

Another vital rule of Yoga breathing is to always inhale only through the nose, with the mouth closed. When we breathe through the mouth we completely bypass the ingenious filtering system with which Mother Nature has equipped us. The combination of tiny hairs and mucous membranes in the nose strains out many of the impurities contained in the air, with the result that cleaner air is brought into the lungs.

Keep in mind that to breathe properly you must be able to control your breath at all times. Until now it has been rushing away from you in all directions, but you must learn to master it and direct and apply it at your will. Eventually controlled breathing will become a natural habit.

Basic Breath

Sit in a comfortable cross-legged position with back, neck, and head in a straight line. Place fingertips lightly on

abdominal area. Inhale deeply through the nose, simultaneously pushing out the abdomen as far as it will go. Exhale slowly, at the same time contracting the abdomen as slowly as possible.

Abdominal Breath

Here the basic breath is done lying on your back. Pull up your legs and rest the soles of your feet flat on the floor. Place your fingers on your abdomen. Inhale as slowly as possible, pushing up the abdomen as far as it will go. Exhale immediately, as slowly as possible, contracting the abdomen at the same rhythm. When the breath is completely exhaled and the stomach muscles firmly contracted, hold out your breath for 7 seconds before inhaling again. You can time yourself by your heartbeat. Perform 8 times. Gradually increase the time you hold out your breath to 10 seconds, 15 seconds, and, as you gain proficiency, to 20 seconds.

BENEFITS.

This technique induces calmness. Practice it any time you are suffering from stress or agitation. This is one of the breathing techniques used in natural childbirth to promote complete relaxation of the abdominal area and the entire nervous system.

It acts as a refresher to relieve fatigue.

It firms the abdominal muscles and is especially good for strengthening the abdominal wall after childbirth or surgery.

It strengthens the inner organs.

Complete Breath

Sit cross-legged on the floor, holding your back, head, and neck in a straight line. Rest your hands loosely, palms up, on your knees. (In the beginning you may keep your

fingertips lightly on your abdomen to check that you are performing the exercise correctly.) Empty your lungs before starting. To the count of 8 inhale deeply while pushing out your abdomen, rib cage, and chest and raising your shoulders slightly in a continuous flowing movement. Hold your breath in the back of your nose for 8 slow counts. Lower your shoulders and start exhaling slowly to the count of 8, contracting your chest, rib cage, and abdomen. When you have completed exhalation, your abdomen and surrounding area should be hollow. Pause 10 seconds. Perform 3 times.

Try to gradually increase the length of inhalation and exhalation to 10 seconds and the holding of the breath to the count of 20. When you have comfortably reached this stage, slowly increase the period of holding your breath by 5 counts at a time. Remember, never strain to hold your breath longer than you can. The exhalation should always be controlled. The various steps of the exercise should be performed in a continuous flowing movement. Eventually learn to direct and hold your gaze at the tip of your nose.

BENEFITS:

It purifies the blood, resulting in a healthy glowing skin and clear complexion.

It overcomes fatigue and restores vitality.

It improves mental alertness and clarity.

It acts as tranquilizer for agitation, tension, and stress and can also normalize breathing in palpitations.

The Complete Breath can be practiced either sitting, standing, or lying down at any time of the day in almost any situation. It can be used very appropriately to fill out any waiting period, such as waiting for a red light to change while driving, waiting at the dentist's office, or waiting at a store to be waited on. It can be done unobtrusively without

raising your shoulders in public. And it is enormously helpful to remember in moments of acute anxiety or pain as an immediate tranquilizer.

Charging or Bellows Breath

As you do this breathing exercise, picture your lungs acting as a bellows forcefully pumping out air. It is the same principle as the Basic Breath, but with greater concentration on the exhalation.

Sit in the cross-legged posture. Empty your lungs. Inhale through your nose, filling your lungs to approximately half of their capacity, and at the same time pushing out your abdomen. Keep your fingers lightly on your abdomen. Very vigorously, exhale through the front of your nose as if you were blowing your nose—it's a good idea to have a handkerchief handy simultaneously contracting the abdomen muscles forcefully. Do 10 breaths followed by 1 Complete Breath. Start off slowly. Think of a train beginning slowly and gradually increasing speed, chugging faster and faster. Increase the speed and number of breaths gradually with practice, adding 10 more Charging Breaths at a time as you can. Follow each set of Charging Breaths with one Complete Breath. After three weeks you should be able to do 30 Charging Breaths comfortably between each Complete Breath. Do not increase to more than 30 without the supervision of an instructor, for you may experience dizziness.

This can also be practiced lying down.

BENEFITS:

You will experience immediate revitalization. The Charging Breath can be compared to the panting of a dog. By panting the dog recharges himself. In the same way, this exercise recharges your battery, replenishing your energy

supply. This breathing can definitely result in a state of exhilaration. Former drug users have found that they can "get high" naturally by prolonged practice of this exercise and experience the same state of euphoria without using drugs, with a more lasting effect. But I must emphasize that extensive practice should not be attempted without the aid of a teacher.

It empties and cleans the walls of the lungs of residue. This is especially recommended for smokers to help clean the lungs of nicotine. Non-smokers will also find it beneficial in expelling the various pollutants we are constantly breathing.

It increases the supply of oxygen in the blood, producing the radiance of good health.

Alternate Nostril Breathing or Pranayama Preceding Meditation

This is also called sun and moon breathing. The right nostril takes in the sun breath and the left nostril the moon breath, representing the positive and negative currents respectively. Some teachers prescribe counting with this exercise, but I find counting distracts, so advise my students to inhale and exhale as slowly as they possibly can without counting.

Sit cross-legged with your spine erect. Extend the thumb and last two fingers of your right hand, bending down the middle two fingers. Even if you are left-handed, use your right hand. You will need practice to assume this hand position comfortably, but the result is more esthetic.

Close your right nostril with your right thumb. Inhale deeply through your left nostril. Immediately close your left nostril with your two extended fingers. Remove your thumb but retain the breath for 2 seconds. Exhale as slowly as possible. Immediately inhale through your right nostril. Close your right nostril with your thumb. Remove your fin-

gers from your left nostril, retain the breath 2 seconds and exhale slowly. This is one round.

In practicing this exercise, always complete the round. Control the exhalation so your breath doesn't rush away from you too quickly.

Start with 3 rounds. Gradually increase to 6. As you become more adept at this exercise, begin retaining your breath 5 seconds with nostrils closed, increasing the holding period by 5 seconds to a maximum of no more than 20 seconds.

BENEFITS:

By balancing the opposite currents in the body, Alternate Nostril Breathing helps restore equilibrium.

In the beginning, you will inhale and exhale more easily on one side than the other because your nostrils are imbalanced and the air is drawn up unevenly, but with practice you can achieve an even and controlled flow of air through each nostril, resulting in improved physical balance.

It promotes calmness and serenity by affecting the balance of the nervous system as well.

It relieves sinus conditions by helping to dissolve obstructions in the sinus cavity.

It facilitates unobstructed breathing by opening up the nasal passages. Regular practice will prevent nasal colds.

It relieves headaches.

It helps cure insomnia.

It prepares the body and mind for meditation, making them more receptive.

SITTING EXERCISES

Since much of our tension is centered in the back of the neck and upper spine, it is good to loosen this region before starting the sitting exercises. The following simple neck

movement, which can be done either standing or sitting cross-legged, is most effective in loosening this tight area.

Neck Roll

Imagine your head is hanging limply on a stem. Keeping your back straight, let your head drop loosely toward your chest. Rotate your head to the left slowly to the count of 5. Let it drop toward your left shoulder. Rotate it slowly to your back to the count of 5, and let it drop toward your back. Rotate it to your right shoulder to the count of 5, and let it drop. Rotate it to the front to the count of 5, and let it drop toward your chest. Do this 3 times, then 3 times to the right.

Follow with 3 continuous rolls to the left, each to the count of 10, and 3 to the right.

Alternate Leg Stretch

This exercise is the guide line for determining the flexibility of the spine, which is the prerequisite for all the ensuing exercises. Once the spine is flexible, everything else will fall into line. You don't have to strain, pull, jerk, or fidget, for just by holding the position, the spine will stretch itself, extending the whole spinal column. Although there may be some initial discomfort, it will soon disappear. Sit straight with both legs extended in front of you. With both hands pick up your left foot and place your heel in your perineum with your sole against your right thigh. Always handle your limbs gently to avoid discomfort. Keep both knees on the floor, if possible, and back straight. Place your hands in front of you, palms down, and clasp one thumb. Take a deep breath, simultaneously lifting your arms, elbows straight, above your head. Lean back slightly, and stretch from the waist. Still holding your breath and the stretch, keeping arms and leg straight, come forward over your right leg. Firmly clasp, with thumbs on top, whatever

part of your leg you can reach—knee, calf, or ankle. Bending elbows outward, pull yourself down. Working from the lower spine and elbows, bring your head as close to your knee as you can (Fig. 1). Exhale slowly. Hold at your limit, but do not overstrain.

Fig. 1. Alternate Leg Stretch

Completely sink into the position. Hold for 10 seconds, gradually increasing to 20 seconds. Sit up slowly, gracefully sliding your hands up your legs, and without stopping, move into the repetition of the exercise. Perform this exercise 3 times on each side. To do the advanced position, place your foot on top of your thigh (Fig. 2).

BENEFITS:

The Alternate Leg Stretch is one of the best positions for restoring flexibility, elasticity, and youthfulness to any spine in any condition.

The hold benefits the legs as much as the back by stretching muscles, ligaments, and tendons.

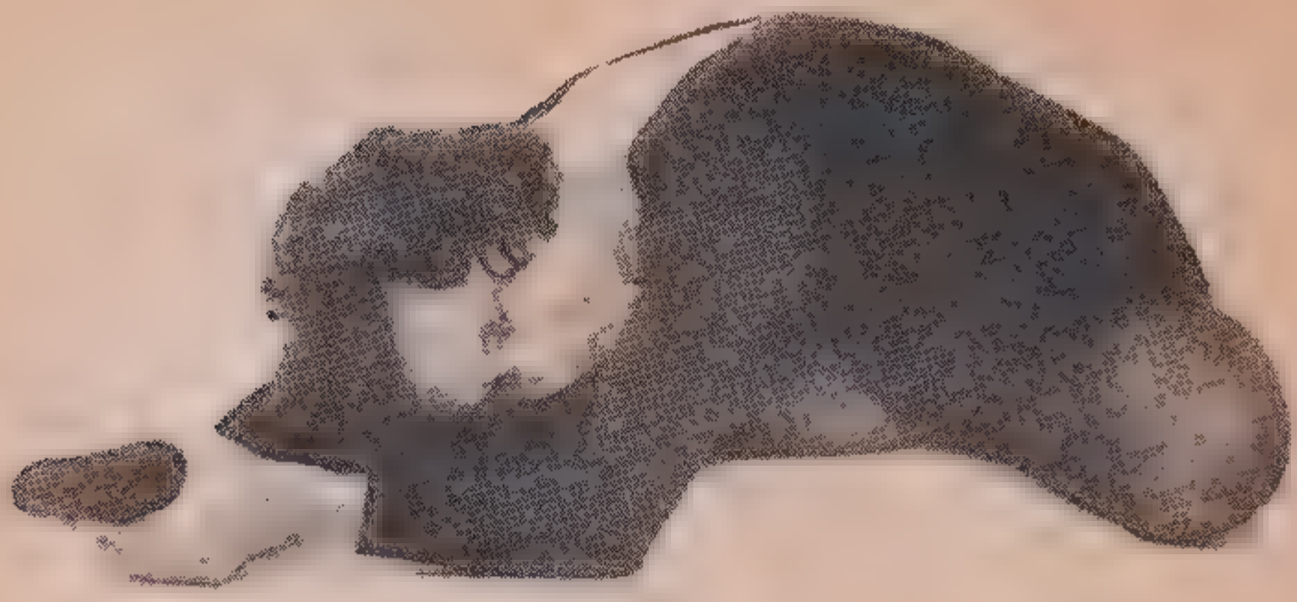


Fig. 2. Advanced Alternate Leg Stretch

It relieves stiffness and tension, especially in the back of the legs. It firms the entire body, especially legs, thighs, buttocks, hips, and abdomen.

Lotus Posture

The Lotus Posture is always regarded as the classic Yoga pose. It is possible to become proficient in Yoga without ever achieving the full Lotus. However, I advocate the Lotus not so much for its classical significance but for its numerous benefits to the legs.

Children can do it easily, and many adults without too much effort, depending on the flexibility of the legs and body construction, but to the majority of people it seems utterly impossible. It may take a long time to achieve for some, sometimes even two years, but everyone can attain the Lotus Posture if he desires. It is only a matter of practice.

Practice Toward the Lotus Seat

The following two exercises prepare the body for the Lotus Posture.

Thigh Stretch

Sit erect. Place the soles of your feet together. Interlock your fingers, and place your hands under your feet. Pull your feet toward you. Inhale, and force your knees toward the floor. Don't be afraid to push down as far as possible (Fig. 3). Exhale slowly. Hold the extreme position for 10 seconds and release. Perform 3 times.

Fig. 3. Thigh Stretch

Leg Bounce

Don't include this in your daily practice routine, but try it at spare moments sitting on the floor, such as when you're watching television.

Extend your legs, slightly apart, in front of you. Gently pick up your right foot, and guide it to rest on top of your left thigh as high into the groin as possible. Don't be dismayed if your right knee is way up in the air. You can put

your money on the promise that it will go down. Hold your foot with your left hand, and place your right hand on top of your right knee and bounce it gently. Reverse, and place your left leg on your right thigh. Don't force or strain; eventually it will reach the floor under its own power. Don't be in a hurry—time and patience will accomplish everything. As your legs are becoming more and more flexible, try the Half Lotus.

Half Lotus

Extend your legs in front of you. Hold on to your right foot with both hands, and place the sole against the inside of your left thigh. Bend your left knee and gently lift up your leg to rest on your right thigh. Make an effort to bring both knees to the floor and to sit as straight as possible (Fig. 4).

Full Lotus Seat

You should only attempt the Full Lotus when one of your knees reaches the floor in the Leg Bounce, and your foot is near your groin or, ideally, touching the groin.

When you are in this position, bend your other knee, hold on to your foot with both hands, and lift it gently but firmly to lie as high as possible on your opposite thigh (Fig. 5).

In the beginning, hold the posture for only a few seconds, gradually increasing the time to one minute or longer, and eventually achieving a comfortable position to be assumed during meditation.

You will find one leg to be much more pliable and cooperative than the other, but to arrive at perfect physical balance of the body, you must work equally, or perhaps more, with the other leg. The same goes for all the ensuing exercises. You will discover either your left or right side to be

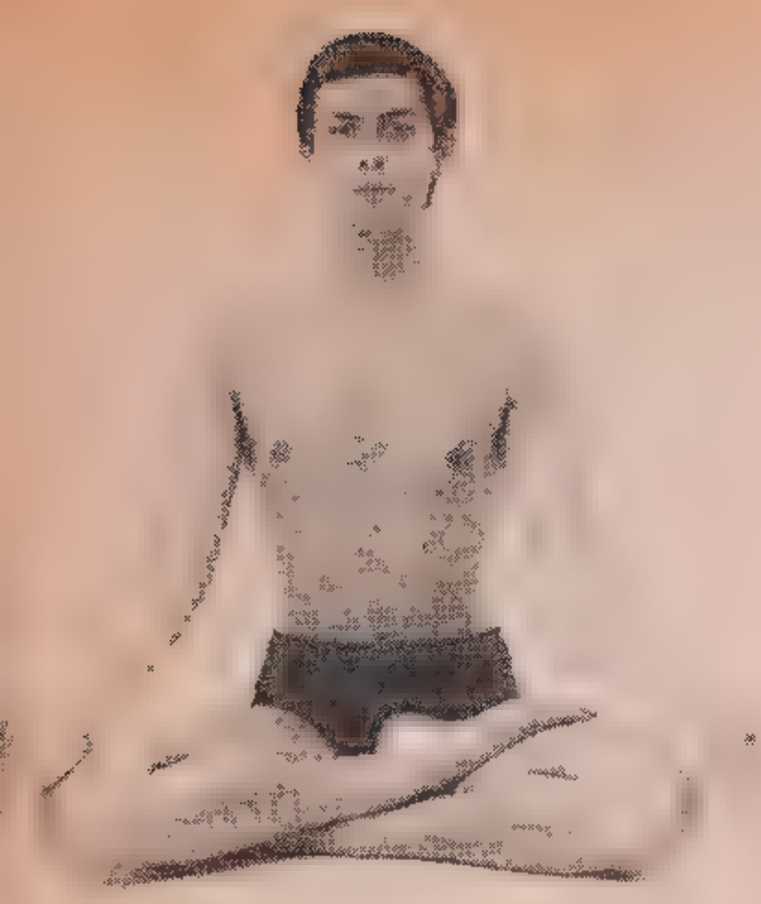


Fig. 4. Half Lotus

Fig. 5. Full Lotus Seat

more flexible, so you should make an effort to concentrate on the stiffer side as much or more.

BENEFITS:

It makes the legs more shapely. I've found that the Lotus Position more than any other posture beautifies the legs. Heavy legs become slimmer, and skinny legs fill out.

It firms the thighs.

It strengthens the ankles.

It restores elasticity to legs, hips, and ankles.

By improving the blood circulation, it helps prevent arthritis and rheumatism and greatly relieves any existing joint disease.

STANDING EXERCISES

Gracefulness is a vital component of all Yoga movements. The intangible benefits to be gained from moving

with grace and maintaining a beautiful image of yourself can never be overestimated. As you move from the sitting to standing exercises, rise as if the movement were part of a ballet. Cross your legs. Lean forward slightly, placing your fingertips next to your thighs. Use your fingertips to push yourself up to a standing position, and uncross your legs. Check your posture before beginning each standing exercise. Forget the old army idea of shoulders back, chest out. Tuck in your abdomen and buttocks. Keep your back straight, shoulders relaxed, and chin tilted slightly up. Keep your feet a little apart with heels together. Rest your arms exactly at your sides. Imagine there are seams in your sides, and lay your arms directly on the seams.

Basic Stretch

As you do this exercise, work rhythmically, thinking of yourself as a ballerina.

Place your feet in a V-position with heels together for proper balance. To the count of 8, simultaneously inhale, slowly lift your arms straight sideways, palms outward, over your head, and rise up on your toes. Clasp one of your thumbs, keeping your elbows straight and your head between your arms. Stretch from the waist as far as you can (Fig. 6). Hold the stretch and breath for 5 seconds.

To the count of 8, simultaneously exhale, lower your arms, palms down, and lower your heels to the floor.

Gradually increase inhalation and exhalation to the count of 10 and the holding period by 5 seconds at a time to 20 seconds.

Perform 3 times.

BENEFITS:

This overall stretch relaxes you by breaking through internal and external tensions.

It promotes both a general feeling of youthfulness and a youthful appearance.

It increases your sense of balance and poise.

It stretches your spine.

It helps increase coordination.

It acts to totally invigorate you.

Side Stretch

This exercise should be performed in one continuous graceful movement. Stand straight, arms at your sides, heels together, and feet slightly apart in a V-position. To the count of 8 simultaneously inhale and raise your straight arms, palms up, sideways above your head, keeping feet flat on the ground. Clasp your thumb, and stretch up from the waist as high as you can. Keeping your head between your arms, to the count of 3, bend directly to the left as far as possible (Fig. 7). Immediately straighten up to the count

Fig. 6. Basic Stretch

Fig. 7. Side Stretch

of 3. Exhale. Inhale, and stretch up. To the count of 3, bend directly to the right. Immediately straighten up to the count of 3. Stretch up. To the count of 8, simultaneously exhale and lower arms, palms down.

Perform 3 times.

As you gain experience, try to hold your breath throughout the entire exercise, exhaling as your arms are lowered. Don't be afraid to stretch as far as you can.

BENEFITS:

Besides stretching your body, the Side Stretch is excellent for firming and conditioning.

It firms and conditions the side muscles, muscles that rarely if ever get a workout.

It slims the waistline and the whole side of your upper body.

It helps eliminate a spare tire.

It acts as a relaxant.

Dancer's Pose

Stand straight with arms at your sides. Move your right foot forward slightly, placing all your weight on it. Slowly bend your left leg behind you and press it firmly against your body with your left hand, keeping both thighs together. At this point, straighten your body and establish your balance. Slowly raise your right arm straight up over your head, stretch your body upward, bringing your head back, and pull your left foot up toward your back (Fig. 8). Inhale. Hold the breath and stretch for 10 seconds. Simultaneously slowly lower your arm and foot and exhale.

Perform this exercise 3 times balancing on the right foot and 3 times on the left.

A good way to practice for this position is to lift one leg

Fig. 8. Dancer's Pose

Fig. 9. Advanced Dancer's Pose

and bounce on the other, keeping the sole of your foot flat on the floor.

Throughout the exercise concentrate on the foot that bears your weight.

If you find it too difficult to perform this exercise, you may lightly rest the side supporting your weight against a wall until your balance has improved.

Once you have mastered the above, continue to the more advanced movements of this position. Do not lower your arm and foot but exhale in the first position.

Then inhale and tilt your body forward, and still holding your ankle, extend your leg as far as possible.

Bring your arm and head forward (Fig. 9).

Think of it as a ballet movement.

Hold the breath and stretch for 10 seconds, increasing

to 20 seconds. Slowly straighten your body. Simultaneously lower your foot and hand slowly and exhale.

BENEFITS:

The Dancer's Pose is an intense stretch for the spine, back, and shoulders, relieving backaches and tension in the back and shoulders.

It works to improve the entire figure.

It develops the chest and beautifies the bustline.

It improves posture.

It aids in attaining poise, grace, and coordination for the whole body.

Standing Twist

Stand straight with your feet about 12 inches apart. Inhale. Turn wrists until fingertips point upwards. Extend your arms straight out sideways at shoulder level. Inhale. Twist your body slowly to the left, keeping your feet flat on the floor, pointing frontwards, until you are facing the back wall, if possible (Fig. 10). Hold 10 seconds. Slowly twist back as you exhale. Do not lower arms, and repeat 2 more times. Lower arms. Do 3 times to the right.

BENEFITS:

This is an excellent exercise for achieving spinal flexibility.

It reduces and firms the waistline.

It eliminates and prevents a spare tire.

It firms and strengthens arms and shoulders.

Headknee Bend

Stand straight with feet together and arms in front of you. Slowly raise your arms straight overhead and bend back as far as you can. Inhale and stretch. Hold the breath

Fig. 10. Standing Twist

Fig. 11. Headknee Bend

and the stretch. Exhale as you bend forward from the waist, keeping your knees straight. Firmly grasp whatever part of your legs you can—calves or ankles. Still keeping your legs straight, bend your elbows and bring your head toward your knees (Fig. 11). Hold 10 seconds. In the ultimate position your head will touch your knees. Do this twice.

BENEFITS.

This is an overall firmer and beautifier for the entire body.

It firms and slenderizes the hips.

It stretches and strengthens the ligaments in the back, neck, and legs.

The completed movement assures superb flexibility of the entire spine.

Arm Roll

Stand straight, with feet about 12 inches apart. Extend your arms straight out to the sides at shoulder level with palms up and fingers spread apart. Inhale. Keeping your arms still, slowly roll your hands down and around as far as they will go. Only your wrists are moving. Hold 5 seconds, increasing to 10. Slowly roll your hands back to their original position as you exhale.

Do this 5 times without lowering your arms.

BENEFITS:

This exercise is of the greatest benefit for restoring the contours of the upper arms, preventing flabbiness and sagging of the upper arm muscles.

It strengthens the arms, shoulders, and chest muscles.

It improves posture.

Foot Roll

All too often we neglect one of the most important parts of our body—our feet, which carry the burden of the entire body. I urge you not to omit this simple but very effective exercise, for the condition of your feet greatly influences the way you function, look, and feel.

Breathe normally during this exercise. Stand straight with feet slightly apart and arms at your sides. Start by standing on your toes. Now roll your feet to stand on their outer edges, then on the heels, and finally, with knees together, on the inner edges. And back on your toes. Perform the complete roll at least 10 times without pausing. If at first you have difficulty balancing, hold on to a wall or chair for support.

BENEFITS:

It strengthens arches and insteps.

It revives tired feet.

It relieves foot ailments.

It improves circulation.

It helps prevent arthritis in the feet and improves existing arthritic conditions.

It slenderizes the ankles.

Abdominal Lift

Caution: Never perform this exercise on a full stomach.

Stand with your feet spread apart. Place your hands high on your thighs near your groin with fingers pointing down toward the inside of your thighs and thumb bent backwards. Bend your knees to almost a half squat. Establish good balance for your upper body. Inhale deeply through your nose, and vigorously expel the breath through your mouth. There should be no air left in the lungs while executing this exercise. Draw up the rib cage and diaphragm as far as possible, forming a deep hollow between your ribs (Fig. 12). Then forcefully thrust out your abdomen as far as

Fig. 12. Abdominal Lift

you can. Do this to a brisk 1-2 rhythm. Pull up on 1. Push out on 2, with definite emphasis on pushing out.

Do this 5 times without inhaling. Inhale and exhale and do 5 more times. When this pattern feels comfortable increase to 10 times between inhalations. Increase by 5 until you are eventually doing 20 lifts between inhalations. When you do it for longer counts you must speed up the rhythm.

The Abdominal Lift may also be performed on all fours and in the seated, cross-legged posture.

For greatest effectiveness practice this first thing in the morning before any intake of food. Practice the Abdominal Lift, especially in the beginning, in front of a mirror with your midriff section exposed to check whether you are doing it correctly.

This is the most ingenious internal exercise, for by consistent practice you can help ensure perfect health for your entire system. The benefits will become evident in a very short time.

Eventually you will be able to manipulate your abdominal muscles at will. Then you can attempt a churning movement, rotating the inner organs, first to the left and then to the right side, in a complete stomach roll. (If you aspire to become a belly dancer, this is definitely for you.)

BENEFITS:

The Abdominal Lift strengthens the abdomen, diaphragm, ribs, and all the visceral organs.

It eliminates flab in the abdominal area and around the waist.

It regulates the digestive system.

It relieves gastro-intestinal disorders such as flatulence and constipation.

SPECIAL EXERCISES

Following are some special exercises to add to your basic practice plan for extra benefits. They are done from a seated position.

To come from a standing to a sitting position, cross your ankles and lower your body, using your fingertips for support as you reach the floor.

Hip Stand

Draw your knees up close to your chest. Bring your arms between your legs, and grasp the insides of your heels. Sit straight, inhale, and extend your left leg to the side, keeping your knees straight. Hold 10 seconds, exhale, and relax. Do this 3 times with the left leg and 3 times with the right leg.

Now comes the tricky part. Hold on to both heels and lift both legs slightly. Straighten your back and establish balance in the region of your coccyx. Inhale. Now slowly lift both legs and extend to the sides as straight as possible, as if you were doing a split off the ground (Fig. 13). Hold for 10 seconds, exhale, and relax. Perform twice.

Fig. 13. Hip Stand

Fig. 14. Pelvic Stretch

In the beginning you will surely roll backwards. Try not to laugh at yourself, but keep practicing until you achieve the proper balance.

BENEFITS:

This exercise is excellent for firming the thighs.

It relieves stiffness in the leg muscles, especially in the hamstrings.

It strengthens the muscles in the upper back.

It promotes balance and coordination.

Pelvic Stretch

Sit up straight with legs together in front of you. Place your hands flat on the floor about five inches behind you with the fingers pointing sideways away from your body. With arms straight and heels pressing into the floor, inhale and slowly raise yourself off the floor. Your pelvis should be raised as high as you can, your back arched, feet flat on the floor, and head back. Your weight should be supported by your hands and feet (Fig. 14). Hold this position for 5 seconds. Come down slowly and exhale. Gradually increase hold to 10 seconds. Do this 3 times.

BENEFITS:

It firms hips, thighs, and buttocks.
It helps strengthen arms, shoulders, and back muscles.
It relieves tension in the neck and back.
It alleviates muscle cramps and spasms in the legs.

Twist

This intricate position is aptly named. Although complicated to perform without an instructor, I included it because of its benefits, especially to the back and waist. To help you keep track of where all your arms and legs belong, I've numbered the steps, but remember what you're aiming for is a continuous flow of movements. It would be a good idea to keep the book at your side to refer to as you go along.

Simple Twist

1. Sit erect with legs together extended in front. Bend your right leg, bringing the foot to stand next to the left thigh.

2. Clasp your hands around your right ankle, and lift your leg over the left thigh to stand parallel to it.

3. Place your right hand directly behind you.

4. Lift your left arm over your right knee, and with your elbows pressing against your right thigh, firmly grip your left knee.

5. Inhale, and twist the upper part of your body to the right as far as you can, putting all the pressure on your right hand (Fig. 15). Hold the pose for 10 seconds.

6. Exhale. Continue to hold 10–20 seconds more.

7. Untangle yourself, and repeat on the left side. Do one on each side.

Fig. 15. Simple Twist

When you've mastered the Simple Twist, go on to the advanced twist.

Advanced Twist

1. Sit erect with legs together extended in front. Bend your right knee, bringing your feet close to your perineum.

2. Place your right sole along the inside of your left thigh. Your right knee should now be on the floor.

3. Bend your left leg, bringing your left foot to stand next to your right foot.

4. Grasp your left ankle with both hands, and guide your left foot over your right knee to stand on the floor parallel to your right knee.

5. Place your left hand directly behind you.

6. Bring your right hand over your left knee, and with

Fig. 16. Advanced Twist

your elbow pressing against your left knee, firmly grip your right knee. (As you become more adept, you can try to hold your left ankle or foot as pictured.)

7. Inhale, and twist the upper part of your body to the left, using the hand behind you as leverage to twist as far as you can (Fig. 16). Hold 10 seconds.

8. Exhale, and hold another 20 seconds, turning your head to the front.

9. Untangle yourself, and repeat on the right side, bending your left knee first and ending up twisted to the right. Do once on each side.

BENEFITS:

By locking the lower part of your body, you're free to twist the upper body to its utmost, enabling you to get rid of back pains, strains, kinks, and general discomfort.

Spinal flexibility is improved.

This is one of the finest positions to eliminate your spare tire.

Twisting the body helps take inches from your waist.

You will experience immediate invigoration.

LYING DOWN EXERCISES

Stretch your legs out in front of you, rest your hands on your thighs, inhale, and lie down as slowly as possible, keeping your feet on the floor. Exhale.

Shoulderstand

The Shoulderstand is the inverted posture, second only to the Headstand in providing the most invigorating influence to the entire body.

Lie with legs straight together, arms close to your body, the palms of your hands down. Pressing your arms and palms against the floor, inhale and slowly raise your legs, keeping them straight and hips and buttocks off the floor. As you do this, concentrate on tightening your legs and abdominal muscles. Keeping upper arms on the floor, place your hands on the lower spine for support. Gradually move your hands up your spine toward the floor, pushing yourself into the extreme position with legs and body straight as a candle (Fig. 17). Exhale. Press your chin into your jugular notch. Work up to holding the position for 3 minutes, breathing normally.

Once you've achieved the utmost spinal straightness, try moving your hands toward the floor and interlocking them (as pictured in the Plough). Maintain the position by the strength of your spine. In the ultimate position the body rests entirely on the shoulders with the chin pressed into the collarbone for sole support.

Hold as long as possible.

Fig. 17. Shoulderstand

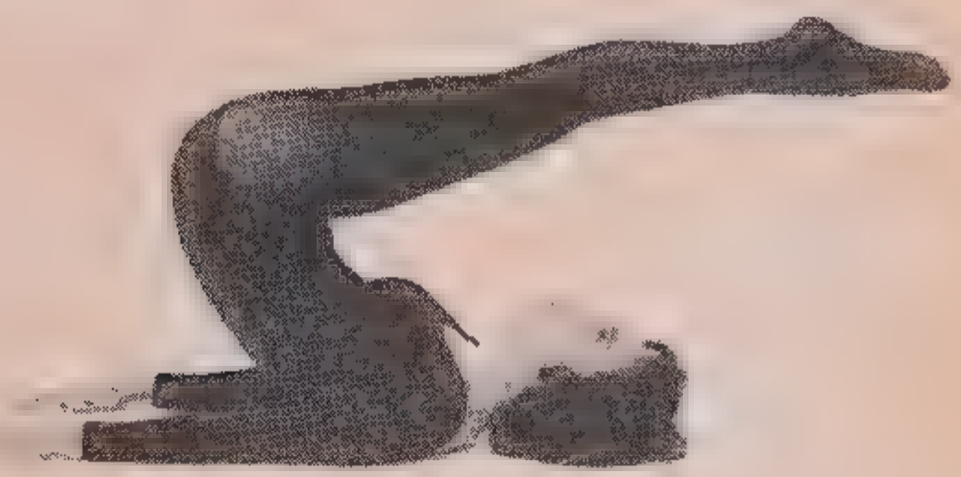


Fig. 18. Coming out of the Shoulderstand

To come out of the Shoulderstand, open your hands flat on the floor, inhale and slowly lower straight legs all the way to the floor, and exhale. Arch your neck and upper back to prevent your head from rising off the floor. This gradual lowering movement exercises, stimulates, and massages the entire spine, working out each vertebra (Fig. 18). Relax and breathe deeply.

Do once.

What I have described is the extreme position of the

Shoulderstand, but keep in mind that holding the body in any degree of an inverted position is beneficial. If you can't straighten your body at first, hold at any angle at which you can support yourself with your hands. As your spine becomes stronger, it will straighten further.

If you cannot lift your hips off the floor, practice lying in a doorway over the threshold. By holding on to the side of the doorway you will be able to lift your hips off the floor.

As you come out of the position do not lower your hands to the floor until you're sure your back has gained sufficient strength to support you. Use your hands to support your back to avoid hurting yourself.

These are two excellent exercises for firming the legs that can be done in the inverted position of the Shoulderstand:

Slow Bicycle

Slowly rotate your legs as if you were pushing the pedals of a bike.

Scissors

Slowly open your legs wide to the side and bring them together in the action of a scissors opening and closing.

BENEFITS:

The blood is able to flow freely through the entire body, stimulating organs and glands. Improved circulation helps relieve pain from varicose veins. The heart is relieved from pumping to the upper body against the force of gravity.

Increased blood supply to the head improves the complexion.

The spine is strengthened.

The stepped-up flow of blood to the brain combats fatigue and tones up the nervous system.

The visceral organs are relieved from the constant pull of gravity, often correcting digestion disorders.

Pressing the chin into the jugular notch can stimulate and massage the thyroid gland as an aid to normalizing weight and promoting overall health.

Plough

Lie with legs straight together, arms to your body and the palms of your hands down. Pressing your arms and palms against the floor, inhale and slowly raise your legs, keeping them straight. As in the Shoulderstand, concentrate on tightening your leg and abdominal muscles. Continue moving your legs over your head until your toes reach the floor. Exhale. Keep your knees straight. Hold 2 minutes. Breathe regularly.

For a more intensive stretch, interlock your fingers behind your back and walk your feet as far away from your head as you can (Fig. 19).

To come out of the position, open your hands flat on the floor, inhale and begin lowering your legs back into a reclining position. Keep your legs straight and move them slowly all the way down to the floor. At the same time arch

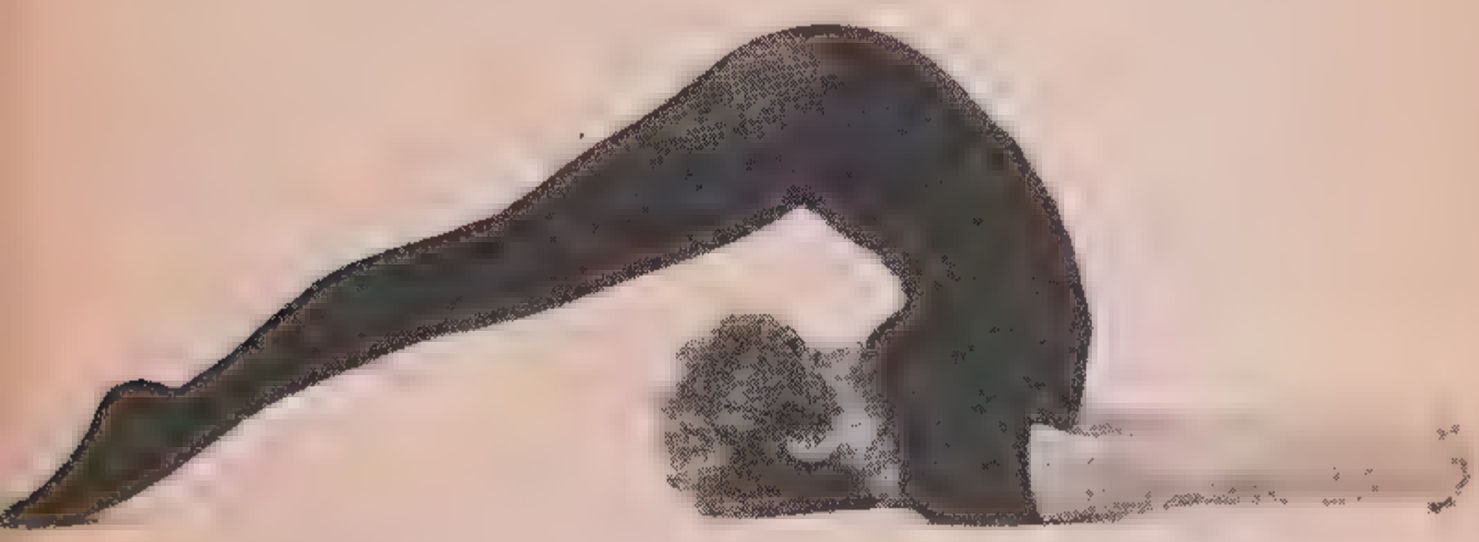


Fig. 19. Plough

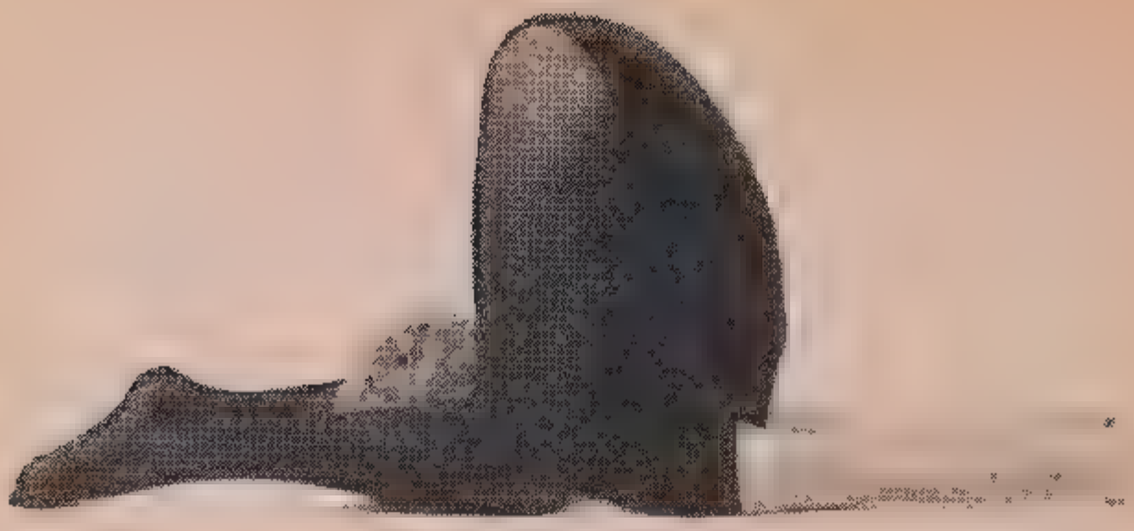


Fig. 20. Advanced Plough

your neck to massage the entire spine. Exhale, relax and breathe deeply.

Do once.

As a variation, when you have reached the extreme position with your feet on the floor and your spine has gained flexibility, try this:

Open your legs and bring your knees to the floor on either side of your head. Hold on to your ankles and pull your knees down toward your shoulders (Fig. 20). It may sound unbelievable to the beginner, but in time this will become a comfortable position. If you're out of condition and can't reach the floor with your toes, bring your legs back as far as you're able. Support your spine, and hold the position as long as you can. Your spine will stretch with practice, and you will soon be able to achieve the extreme position.

BENEFITS:

A healthful conditioning pressure is applied to the abdominal and pelvic organs.

The spine is stretched for maximum flexibility and rejuvenation.

Dorsal muscles are strengthened.

Blood circulation is improved, resulting in a lovelier complexion.

The Plough firms the hips, thighs, and abdomen, while helping to subtract inches from those areas.

It can often provide almost immediate relief from tension and headaches.

Arthritis and backache sufferers have reported the greatest relief with this posture.

After coming out of the Shoulderstand or the Plough, it is advisable to manipulate the spine in a convex position as in the Simple Fish.

Fig. 21. Simple Fish

Simple Fish

Lie on your back with your legs straight in front of you and your arms at your sides. Place your arms straight under you, with your palms on the floor. Lift your shoulders and upper back in an arch, with the very top of your head touching the floor (Fig. 21). Hold 30 seconds. Feel that the weight of your body is supported by your lower arms. Do this twice. Then do it a third time, inhaling as you arch up. Hold 10 seconds, and exhale.

BENEFITS:

This posture is of great cosmetic value to men and women, preventing crepy neck and double chins by firming

Fig. 22. Advanced Fish

the muscles. It can also improve any existing unattractive condition.

The thyroid gland is stimulated.

This exercise acts as an overall tonic to the nervous system.

Advanced Fish

Lie on your back, cross your legs and fold them under you. Hold on to your feet or if possible your ankles. Arch the upper part of your body as in the first position, simultaneously pulling your feet under your buttocks. Now arch your thighs and hips and bring your knees to touch the floor (Fig. 22). This position really sounds and looks more complicated than it is. It can be achieved by most intermediate students.

Practice as in the Simple Fish.

BENEFITS:

In addition to the benefits of the Simple Fish:
It firms the thighs and hips.
It strengthens and rejuvenates the feet.
It relieves tension throughout the spine.

Fig. 23. Complete Leg Stretch

To move into a sitting position for the next exercise, straighten your legs and bring your arms over your head to lie on the floor. Clasp your thumb, inhale and come into a sitting position, without moving your feet off the floor. If this proves too difficult at first, try sitting up by rocking from side to side. Bring down your arms and exhale.

Complete Leg Stretch

The Complete Leg Stretch is a variation of the Alternate Leg Stretch which you performed earlier in your practice session to loosen up your tight muscles. As you do this now, you will see how your body has gained in flexibility from the preceding movements.

Sit erect, with legs extended straight in front of you and hands on your thighs. Slowly raise both arms straight in front of you until they are above your head. Clasp your thumb and lean back slightly. Stretch and inhale. Holding the breath and the stretch, come forward as in a graceful dive. Grip firmly whatever part of your legs you can reach—calves, ankles, or feet. Bending your elbows, pull your head down toward your knees (Fig. 23). Hold your extreme position and exhale slowly. Continue to hold 20 seconds.

Do 3 times.

BENEFITS.

The Complete Leg Stretch provides an intense stretch to the spinal column and legs, strengthening and restoring elasticity to all the muscles involved.

It is a powerful aid in firming the legs. It helps reduce the waist, abdomen, and hips.

A word before going on. Coming up are the three classic Yoga positions performed on the abdomen which I consider the most strenuous—the Cobra, the Locust, and the Bow. I must admit they're not so much fun as the others, but they certainly should not be neglected. For although they require the utmost diligence, these are three of the most important Yoga exercises, because they work directly on both the inner organs and the outer body to restore and maintain complete physical health. Be sure to allow two minutes between each of these exercises to relax and repeat the deep breathing.

Now: A graceful way to move from your sitting position to a prone position: Bend your legs and bring both legs to one side. Place your hands firmly on the floor in front of you, and swing yourself around to lie on your abdomen.

ABDOMINAL EXERCISES

Cobra

Breathe normally.

Lie on your stomach with your arms at your side, hands palms down, and your chin resting on the floor. Keep your feet together to ensure that your spine is in a straight line. In a succession of flowing movements, lift up your chin, roll back your head, and raise your shoulders. Without stopping the movement, bring your arms directly under

Fig. 24. Cobra

your chest with fingertips facing. Keeping your abdomen on the floor and your head back, continue pushing yourself up as slowly as possible until your arms are straight (Fig. 24). Hold your extreme position 20 seconds, concentrating on shifting all your weight onto your arms, pushing your abdomen toward the floor, and looking at the ceiling. Hold 10 seconds at first, gradually increasing to 30.

Bend your elbows and slowly lower your body, keeping your head back as long as possible. As soon as you are able, bring your arms back to your sides and continue moving down, with your chin the last part of your body to reach the floor. Turn your head to the side and relax. Perform twice.

If you find this too difficult in the beginning, you can start by placing your hands, fingertips facing, under your chest. Use your hands to push yourself up slowly, and straighten your arms as much as you can. Hold the position to your capacity. Come down the same way, with your arms supporting you.

BENEFITS:

The Cobra stretches all the vertebrae, especially those of the upper back and neck, promoting flexibility and generally toning the spine and sympathetic nervous system.

Accumulated tension in the upper back and neck is relieved. Posture is improved.

All the inner organs, including the sex glands, are massaged, stimulating the action of these organs for general good health and sexual vitality.

Muscles in the abdomen, bust, and chest are firmed.

Symptoms of arthritis are relieved.

The Cobra provides fresh vitality. Yet it induces sleep in cases of insomnia.

Neck Twist

This is an alternate for the Neck Roll that was described earlier. It is an excellent movement that can be done after the Cobra.

Lie on your abdomen and prop yourself up on your elbows.

Place your chin in the palm of your right hand and your left hand on the back of your head. Keeping both elbows on the floor, inhale and push your head to twist to the right as far as possible (Fig. 25). Hold 5 seconds. Exhale and slowly

Fig. 25. Neck Twist

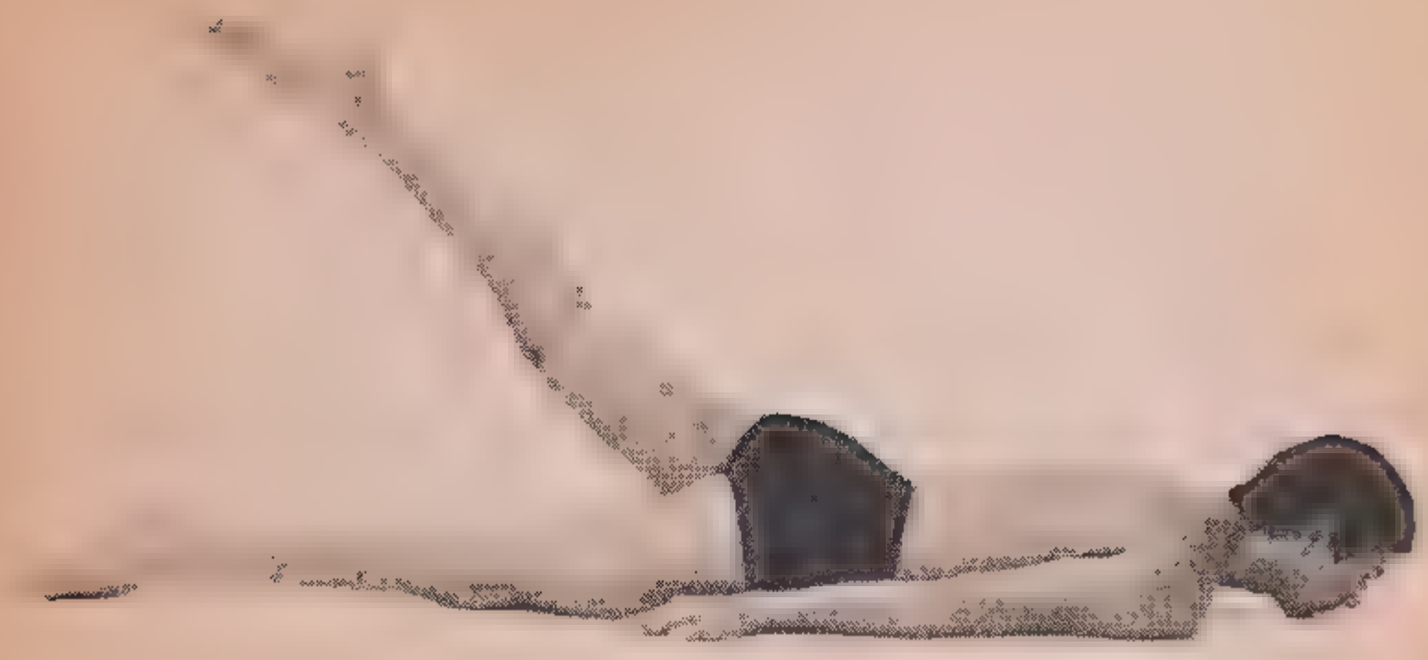


Fig. 26. Half Locust

turn your head to the left, bringing it to rest in your left palm with your right hand behind your head.

Do 3 times on each side.

The Neck Twist can also be practiced sitting on a chair with elbows propped on a desk, which makes it an ideal exercise for the office worker to practice any time he feels fatigued or tense.

BENEFITS:

Tension is released and stiffness relieved in the entire neck. It reduces fatigue and muscular strain.

Half Locust

Lie on your stomach with your chin on the floor and your hands at your sides, palms down. Inhale and, keeping your body straight, lift your left leg straight up as high as you can (Fig. 26). Hold 7 seconds. Exhale and lower your leg to the count of 7. Repeat on the right side. Do twice on each side.

When you feel proficient in the Half Locust, go on to the Full Locust.

Full Locust

Lie on your stomach with your arms at your sides, chin on the floor and feet together. Make fists and bring your entire arms under you with your fists under your thighs so that your body is supported by your arms. Your fists can be up or down, whichever way provides the best balance. Inhale. Keeping your chin on the floor and both feet together, quickly raise both legs off the floor as high and straight as you can (Fig. 27). Hold 7 seconds. Exhale and lower to the count of 5.

Fig. 27. Full Locust

Do it twice, gradually increasing the hold to 20 seconds. Relax completely and breathe deeply.

BENEFITS:

The muscles of the lower body and the arms are subjected to strong tension, resulting in firming of the upper arms, abdomen, hips, buttocks, and thighs.

The sex organs and glands are stimulated.

The Locust works on the lower back area with emphasis on the sacroiliac. The visceral organs and glands are stimulated, to relieve digestive disorders.

Bow

Lie on your stomach, legs together, and chin on the floor. Bring your heels up toward your back. Reach back and firmly grip your ankles. Raise your head, shoulders, and chest off the floor. Then keeping your feet together, lift your legs as high as possible, arching into a perfect bow. Hold 10 seconds (Fig. 28). Lower your knees, then the upper part of your body, and finally let go of your legs. Turn your head to the side. Relax, and breathe deeply.

Do 3 times, gradually increasing the hold to 20 seconds.

For variation, rock back and forth slowly. You will find the movement is made easier by keeping your legs apart. If you cannot reach your ankles hold on to your toes. If

Fig. 28. Bow

you can't raise both legs, do the exercise with only one, alternating between the right and left leg. This will strengthen your leg and back muscles so that eventually you will be able to perform the Bow with both legs.

BENEFITS:

The Bow strengthens and develops the entire spine, resulting in complete elasticity.

It firms the entire body, with emphasis on the upper arms, bust, hips, buttocks, and thighs.

It improves posture.

It helps relieve menstrual disorders and low back pain.

Many of my students report that this exercise gives complete relief from physical and mental tension.

To be in position for the next exercise move gracefully from lying on your stomach to sitting on your knees this way: Place your hands, palms down, next to your shoulders. Lift your head and push up slowly on straight arms. Lift your trunk back slowly until you are sitting on your heels. Imagine that you are a cat stretching every part of your body.

Sit on your heels for one minute. This is excellent stimulation for the feet.

Here is another special exercise to add to your practice plan:

Camel

Breathe normally.

Kneel, and sit on your heels. Move your legs so you are now sitting between them. Hold your ankles, or your heels, and raise your trunk, putting all your weight on your hands.

Arch your back, push your pelvis forward, and bring your head back (Fig. 29). Hold 20 seconds, and sit back slowly.

Do twice.

Fig. 29. Camel

As you progress, practice breath retention with the Camel. Inhale as you push back, hold, and exhale as you relax.

If you find it too uncomfortable to hold either your ankles or heels, spread your hands on your toes.

BENEFITS:

Flexibility of the back is increased.
Muscles of the bust and chest are firmed.

Headstand

The Yoga Headstand is often referred to as "King of the Asanas" because of all its beneficial results and also because of the overwhelming sense of satisfaction you will experience on achieving it. Some find it easy to do, others quite difficult. But the Yoga Headstand is not an acrobatic feat. It can be mastered by anyone. The greatest obstacle in achieving it is the fear of falling, which can be conquered with patience and practice.

Fig. 30. Headstand—First Position

1. Kneel and sit on your heels. Lean forward and place your forearms on the floor. Interlock your fingers and place your hands on the floor with palms facing you.

2. Fit the back of your head into the palms of your hands with the top of your forehead resting on the floor. Keep your elbows as close together as possible.

3. Concentrate on distributing your weight on your forearms. Push up on your toes, lifting your body and straightening your legs. At this point your body has formed an arch.

4. Walk in toward yourself, bringing your knees as close to your chest as you can (Fig. 30).

5. What you must now do is shift your weight from your feet to your forearms so that you "walk" into the Headstand. Raise one leg, then lift the other, keeping both legs folded (Fig. 31). Hold this position 10 seconds, gradually

Fig. 31. Headstand—Second Position

Fig. 32. Headstand—Final Position

increasing your time. Do not attempt to straighten yourself until you are completely confident.

6. Slowly straighten your knees and raise your legs in a straight line, arching your back (Fig. 32).

7. To come out of the Headstand, slowly fold your legs to the position before you straightened them. Roll down to

rest on your knees. Do not pick up your head for at least 30 seconds to allow the blood to flow back normally. Then lie on your back and relax.

Hold the Headstand for 3 minutes, increasing to 10 minutes. Remember, do not be in a hurry to achieve the full Headstand.

I advise caution in learning to perform it, because this is one Yoga position in which you can hurt yourself if you are not careful. Do not advance until you are completely confident that you have mastered the previous steps. Although there is little chance of hurting yourself in the rolled-up position, when you practice without assistance make sure you're on a soft surface or surround yourself with pillows.

Don't attempt the Headstand against a wall, because (a) you can injure yourself, (b) you can't attain the curled-up position, and (c) you will have a false sense of security.

BENEFITS.

I believe the psychological benefits of the Headstand are as important as the physical, because the ability to achieve and hold the position gives you a tremendous feeling of accomplishment and pride.

The complete inversion of the body increases the flow of blood to the brain, revitalizing you and stimulating your mental faculties.

It stimulates the thyroid, pineal, and pituitary glands.

It acts as a tonic for the entire nervous system.

Yogis consider the increased circulation to the scalp as a preventive for gray hair, baldness, and wrinkles.

The complexion is improved.

It helps relieve symptoms of varicose veins.

Complete Relaxation

I recommend that you always end your practice session with the Complete Relaxation. You can also do it any time you feel tense or fatigued.

Lie on your back, with your arms resting next to you, palms of your hands up, and legs straight and loose. Close your eyes, and completely let go of your body. Until you are accustomed to the art of Complete Relaxation, you will have to order your body to relax, command it to go limp, and visualize all the tension flowing out of your body. Let your breath come and go naturally. Try to detach yourself from your body and mind.

Now direct all your concentration on your feet—the toes, soles, heels, ankles, and insteps shutting out all other thoughts. Tense the feet, all the muscles, tendons, and ligaments within. Hold for 20 seconds. Then relax, letting the feet go limp and still.

Work upward now, going through the same process of tensing and relaxing the entire lower body: feet, calves, thighs, hips, and waist.

Contract the inner organs as well, anal sphincters, buttocks, and abdominal muscles. Hold 20 seconds, and relax.

Now forget about the lower part of your body and concentrate on the area from the waist to the shoulders. Tense and relax the torso and shoulders, tightening the inner organs of the diaphragm.

Next concentrate only on the hands and arms, clenching fists and tightening arms, slowly relaxing and letting the hands and arms lie loosely, as if detached from the body.

Then comes the neck, throat, and head. Squeeze your face muscles tightly, compressing the mouth into a thin line and your eyes into slits. Look very pained, hold—and feel your face become soft, relaxed, and beautiful after Com-

plete Relaxation. Now tense your entire body from the top of your head to the tips of your toes, inside and out. Hold 20 seconds, and relax.

Sink into the relaxation for a few minutes. Visualize your body and mind floating away from you, merging with the infinite spirit. Finally, take a few deep breaths, and sit up slowly.

BENEFITS·

You feel refreshed and relaxed.

Aches and pains are relieved.

Complete Relaxation counteracts both fatigue and insomnia.

It tones the entire body, including the facial muscles.

SUGGESTED 8-WEEK PRACTICE PLAN

Learn to categorize the preceding list of movements into Breathing, Sitting, Standing, Lying Down, and Abdominal Exercises, and for best results include at least one of each group in your daily practice schedule, adding the Special Exercises as you progress or as time allows.

Always include the Complete Leg Stretch.

Always conclude your practice session with one of the Headstand positions and Complete Relaxation.

FIRST WEEK

1. *Sitting*
   - Neck Roll
   - Basic Breath
   - Alternate Leg Stretch
2. *Standing*
   - Basic Stretch
   - Side Stretch
3. *Lying Down*
   - Shoulderstand
   - Simple Fish
4. Complete Leg Stretch
5. *Abdominal*
   - Cobra
6. Headstand
7. Complete Relaxation

SECOND WEEK

1. *Sitting*
   - Complete Breath
   - Alternate Leg Stretch
   - Thigh Stretch

2. *Standing*
   - Basic Stretch
   - Side Stretch
   - Dancer's Pose I

3. *Lying Down*
   - Shoulderstand
   - Simple Fish

4. Complete Leg Stretch

5. *Abdominal*
   - Cobra
   - Neck Twist
   - Half Lotus

6. Headstand I

7. Complete Relaxation

THIRD WEEK

1. *Sitting*
   - Neck Roll
   - Complete Breath
   - Alternate Leg Stretch
   - Thigh Stretch

2. *Standing*
   - Basic Stretch
   - Side Stretch
   - Dancer's Pose I
   - Arm Roll
   - Foot Roll

3. *Lying Down*
   - Abdominal Breath
   - Shoulderstand
   - Plough
   - Simple Fish

4. Complete Leg Stretch

5. *Abdominal*
   - Cobra
   - Half Lotus
   - Bow

6. Headstand I

7. Complete Relaxation

FOURTH WEEK

1. *Sitting*
   - Complete Breath
   - Alternate Nostril Breath
   - Alternate Leg Stretch
   - Thigh Stretch

2. *Standing*
   - Basic Stretch
   - Side Stretch
   - Dancer's Pose I and II
   - Standing Twist
   - Arm Roll
   - Foot Roll

3. *Special Exercise*
   - Pelvic Stretch

FOURTH WEEK

4. *Lying Down*
   - Shoulderstand
   - Plough
   - Simple Fish

5. Complete Leg Stretch

6. *Abdominal*
   - Cobra
   - Neck Twist
   - Half Locust
   - Full Locust
   - Bow

7. Headstand I

8. Complete Relaxation

FIFTH WEEK

1. *Sitting*
   - Neck Roll
   - Complete Breath
   - Alternate Breath
   - Alternate Leg Stretch
   - Thigh Stretch
   - Practice Half Lotus

2. *Standing*
   - Basic Stretch
   - Side Bend
   - Dancer's Pose I and II
   - Headknee Bend

3. *Special Exercise*
   - Simple Twist

4. *Lying Down*
   - Shoulderstand
   - Plough
   - Try Advanced Fish

5. Complete Leg Stretch

6. *Abdominal*
   - Cobra
   - Half Locust
   - Full Locust
   - Bow

7. *Special Exercise*
   - Camel

8. Headstand I
   - Try Headstand II

9. Complete Relaxation

SIXTH WEEK

1. *Sitting*
   - Try to sit in Half Lotus
   - Complete Breath
   - Bellows Breath
   - Alternate Leg Stretch
   - Thigh Stretch

2. *Standing*
   - Basic Stretch
   - Side Bend
   - Standing Twist
   - Headknee Bend
   - Arm Roll
   - Foot Roll

3. *Special Exercise*
   - Hip Stand

SIXTH WEEK

4. *Lying Down*

Abdominal Breath
Shoulderstand
Plough
Try Advanced Plough II
Advanced Fish

5. Complete Leg Stretch

6. *Abdominal*

Cobra
Neck Twist
Half Locust
Full Locust
Bow

7. *Special Exercise*

Camel

8. Headstand I

Try Headstand II

9. Complete Relaxation

SEVENTH WEEK

1. *Sitting*

Sit in Half Lotus
Neck Roll
Bellows Breath
Complete Breath
Alternate Leg Stretch
Thigh Stretch
Pranayama
Meditation to sound of OM

2. *Standing*

Basic Stretch
Side Bend
Dancer's Pose I and II
Headknee Bend
Arm Roll
Foot Roll

3. *Special Exercises*

Pelvic Stretch
Advanced Twist

4. *Lying Down*

Shoulderstand (hold 3 minutes)
Plough
Advanced Plough
Advanced Fish

5. *Complete Leg Stretch*

6. *Abdominal*

Cobra
Half Locust
Full Locust
Bow

7. *Special Exercise*

Camel

8. Headstand I

Try Headstand II

9. Complete Relaxation

EIGHTH WEEK

1. *Sitting*
   - Sit in Half Lotus
   - Bellows Breath
   - Complete Breath
   - Alternate Leg Stretch, try Advanced Version
   - Thigh Stretch
   - Try Full Lotus
   - Pranayama
   - Meditation on Object or Candle

2. *Standing*
   - Basic Stretch
   - Side Bend
   - Dancer's Pose I and I
   - Standing Twist
   - Headknee Bend
   - Arm Roll
   - Foot Roll

3. *Special Exercises*
   - Hip Stand
   - Pelvic Stretch
   - Advanced Twist

4. *Lying Down*
   - Shoulderstand (3 minutes) Try Advanced Version
   - Plough
   - Advanced Plough
   - Advanced Fish

5. *Complete Leg Stretch*

6. *Abdominal*
   - Cobra
   - Neck Twist
   - Half Locust
   - Full Locust
   - Bow, try Rocking

7. *Special Exercise*
   - Camel

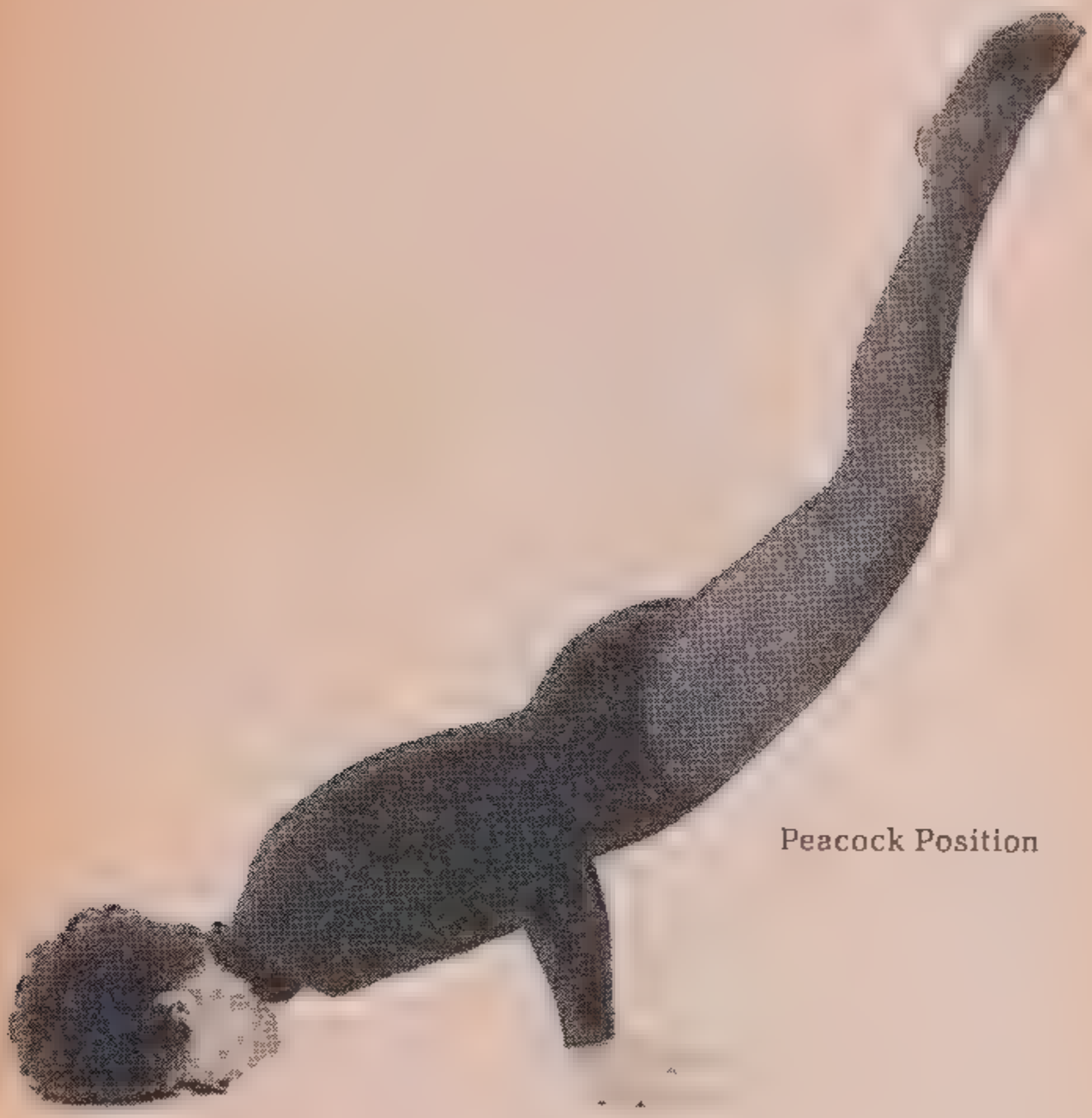
8. Headstand I
   - Try Headstand II or Headstand III

9. Complete Relaxation

ADVANCED POSES BY THE AUTHOR

(not to be attempted without instruction)

Tree Position

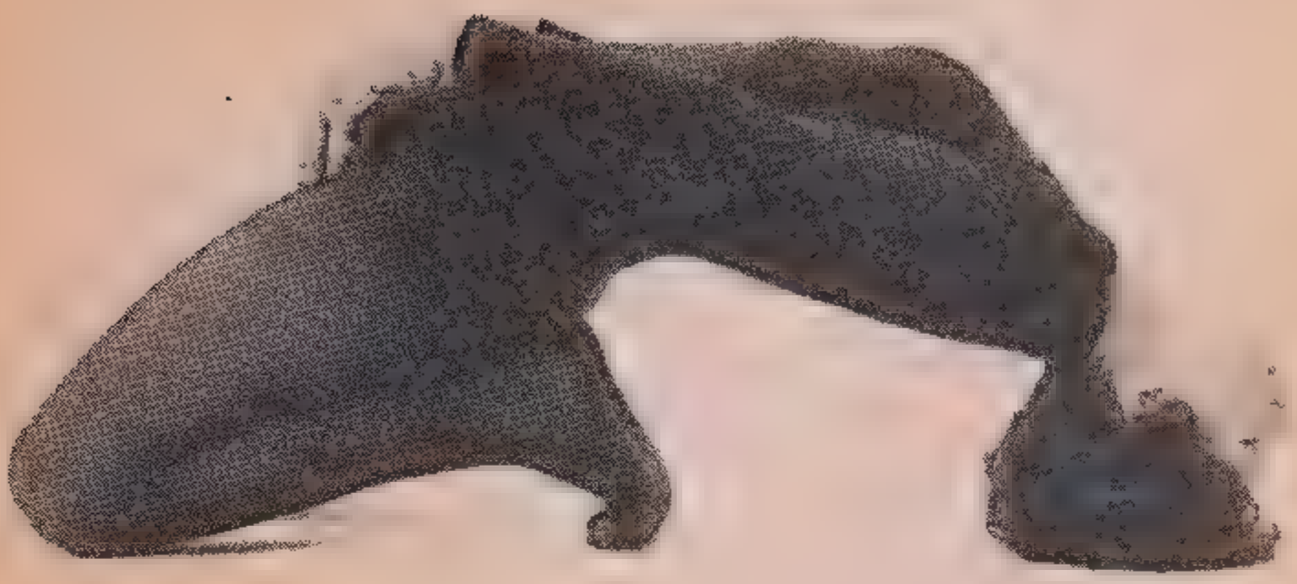


Peacock Position

Toe Balance

Bound Tripod

Version of the Twist



Back Bend Position

Crow—Sideways

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CONCENTRATE ON YOUTH

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